"HIS ONLY SON"

By WM. F. ROBISON, S.J.

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"HIS ONLY SON"

The Truth of the Divinity of Christ

WITHDRAWN

BY
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TO

THE FIREBRAND OF GOD

ST. IGNATIUS LOYOLA

FOREWORD

"His Only Son," the title of this volume, are the words of the Creed, wherein each of the faithful professes: "I believe in God, the Father almighty. . . . And in Jesus Christ, *His only Son,* our Lord." They are the very heart of God's revelation about the Savior of mankind. The divinity of Christ is the central dogma of Christianity: it is the truest reason for the necessity of Christian worship: it is the basis of hope for individuals and for society at large.

The present work, a course of lectures delivered as lenten discourses in St. Francis Xavier's (College) Church, aims at establishing this fundamental doctrine. The number of those, who, even among so-called Christians, have been getting farther and farther away from the sacred truth of Christ's divinity, is positively appalling. As a consequence any help which may aid in bringing the wanderers back is not to be scorned. Moreover any assistance which

will lead those of the household of the faith to a better appreciation of the solidity of the grounds of their belief is worthy of consideration.

Here, as in a previous course of lectures [1] dealing with Catholicity as the concrete realization of Christianity, no claim to special originality of thought or treatment is put forward; but I venture to hope that wider good may come from this presentment of what is vital for men and nations.

Grateful acknowledgment is appropriately made for help derived from approved theological treatises, and especially from the masterly work of Léonce de Grandmaison, S. J., on "Jesus Christ" in the *Dictionnaire Apologétique* of A. d'Ales.

For the sake of the more direct and personal appeal of the form of the spoken word the discourses are published just as they were delivered.

William F. Robison, S.J.
St. Louis University.
Feast of St. Ignatius,
July 31, 1918.

[1] Published under title *Christ's Masterpiece.*

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"HIS ONLY SON"

LECTURE I

A VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS

The field of apologetics. Outline of course. Christianity's truth based on Christ's divinity. A type and its antitype. The Church's testimony to Christ approved by God: therefore true. Argument in brief. Detailed examination. Spread of Church. External obstacles. Internal difficulties. Means naturally weak. Words of Vatican Council. Moral miracle points to God as author and stamps Church's testimony as true. Her message to world.

The fleeting months of the passing year have brought us to another Lent with its penance and its prayer for the rejuvenation of our fagged souls and the strengthening of our weakened spirits. It likewise brings us to the serious consideration of the things of God; and this consideration may help us to do our part better here in the valley of our sojourning and to assist others onward

to the blissful home of our Father in heaven. The fundamental truths which lie at the bottom of our religious life are of paramount importance to us: the choice of such a subject for reflection is, I think, a wise one. It is precisely the basic truths of all religion, which today are the object of attack by "the gates of hell." Nowadays it is not merely this or that doctrine of revealed religion, which is assailed: it is all supernatural religion, nay, it is religion in general. And where the attack is made, there must we turn our defense.

We must be able to give a reason for the faith that is in us: we must be prepared to defend the sacred truth of God against the negligent indifference of some and the presumptuous or arrogant scorn of others. We must try to make the way of truth clearer to the right-minded and sincere and to dissipate the ingenious errors of the intellectually or morally dishonest, so that the first may find and the others may at least learn to seek the light, which will lead them to the freedom of the children of God. The consideration of these same truths will also help

to the strengthening and broadening of our own faith. Of course, in all these reflections of ours we do not examine in doubt whether the assent of our mind has been well given to the revelation of the all-wise and all-truthful God; but we see better how supremely well-grounded that assent is.

Now, in this examination of fundamental truth, in this field of what is called apologetics, there are three main sections, all leading up to the answer to the query, Why must I be a Catholic? This, as you may remember, was the subject of our thoughtful and prayerful consideration last year.[1] And the answer was briefly this: Starting with the assumption that Jesus Christ was sent of God, that He had a divine mission to men, nay, that He was very God, whose will must be obeyed, whose means of salvation must be made use of, if we are to have part with Him unto the remission of our sins and the attainment of everlasting happiness, we studied what provision He made for the safeguard and transmission of His religion of love. And from the gospel record, which

[1] See *Christ's Masterpiece.*

faithfully tells the story of His life, we traced the establishment of His Kingdom in the Apostolic Twelve with their threefold power of teaching with authoritative and infallible utterance, of sanctifying, and of ruling the souls of men.

Unto the consummation of the world this Church was to continue to do its work of love, alone, without a peer or rival, the one Church of the Christ, the only Kingdom of the King, necessary in God's ordinary providence for the attainment of life everlasting. Christ gave the perpetual primacy of jurisdiction among the Twelve to Simon Peter, the rock on which He built His Church, the key-bearer of the Kingdom, the supreme pastor of the whole flock of the Good Shepherd.

He stamped upon the very being of His sublime work the signs which would differentiate His masterpiece from counterfeits, namely, the moral seal of a holiness surpassing the power of unaided human achievement or even the reach of nature as aided by God's ordinary helps, and the juridical seal of Apostolic succession, proved legiti-

mate by the moral miracle of unbroken unity in striking universality. And from these signs we recognized the Catholic Church alone among all that call themselves the Church of Christ as the Bride of Christ the Bridegroom, the Spouse for whom He delivered Himself that He might sanctify her and present her to Himself without spot or blemish or wrinkle. In a word, the answer to the question, Why must I be a Catholic? is that nowhere but in the Catholic Church is there pure and unadulterated Christianity, that Catholicity is Christ's religion in its concrete reality.

There is indeed a previous question, touching the assumptions with which we began this inquiry; and this question is, Why must one be a Christian? To this the reply is: because Christianity is the religion revealed by Jesus Christ the Son of God; for "God who . . . spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, last of all in these days hath spoken to us by His Son."[1] The revelation made to mankind by the Father of truth and of love must be accepted by every one

[1] Heb. I, 1, 2.

of the creatures of that Supreme Lord, when the fact of the revelation has been established by such proofs as call for the reasonable assent of a prudent mind. The fuller consideration of this question with its answer is to occupy our minds and hearts during this course of lectures.

In the domain of apologetics there is, besides, another question prior even to this, and it is, Why must a man profess any religion at all? The answer to this question rests upon the reality of the existence of a personal God, who has a providence over the work of His hands; on the spiritual freedom of man's will with his obligations and responsibilities towards the God who made him; on the immortality of the soul and on the future life of rewards and punishments, which are the sanctions of God's undying law. These truths, which are the basis of the necessity of professing religion in general, we shall suppose as established beyond the possibility of reasonable doubt,—as in fact they are. To the man who denies or doubts the existence of a personal God, beneficent and provident; to the man who flouts

the notion of free will and the obligation of a fixed moral law; to the man who can look no farther than the limits of this life, and who says that when a man dies, he dies like a dog and perishes utterly (and if he dies that way, why not live like a brute?); to the man who laughs at the future reward or punishment for the deeds done in the days of the flesh, I have nothing to say in the present course of lectures. These lectures are not for him. If he is utterly untrue to his manhood, nothing remains but black despair after a wild orgy of unbridled desire. If he be not hopelessly lost, there is left for him only honest thought and sincere investigation and the tearing away of the mask of smug superiority or hypocritical pretence in his own regard. And we can only beg of God light and grace for such blinded unfortunates: we can only plead that when this light is given, it may not be ignored, and that men may not "love the darkness rather than the light." [1]

These, then, are the three questions of apologetics; and it is to the second of

[1] John III, 19.

these questions with its answer that I wish to direct your careful reflections. If Christianity is true, one must embrace Catholicity. This conclusion results from the study of the Church. Is, then, Christianity true? And the answer is, Yes. It is true, because it is the religion revealed by Jesus Christ the Son of God. Since we wish to see this truth in all its splendid light, the general subject of these considerations will be the reasonable grounds of our belief in the divinity of Jesus Christ.

True it is, that in order to establish the sacred claims of Christianity and of Christ's one true Church it is not absolutely necessary to prove Christ to be divine. For this it is, strictly speaking, sufficient to show beyond the cavilling of pride or passion and with reasons that merit the assent of every prudent mind, that He is the envoy of God, the ambassador of the Most High, the legate and herald of the All-Wise, the indispensable witness of the Eternal. For, if He is all this, then His message is the message of heaven, and the duty lies upon every man to heed that word from on high.

But after all, why stop here? Every student of the life of Jesus of Nazareth, whether believer or unbeliever, has before his mind's eye the teaching of the Church that Christ is in truth divine: all search for the justification of the doctrine that He is in a unique and incommunicable sense the very Son of God. It has been well said: "The Apostles themselves were not fully Christians till they knew through faith all that Christ was,—their God and Redeemer as well as their Master." [1]

Ah, would to God that these words, big with truth, would be seriously pondered by many who call themselves Christians, nay, who dare to stand in Christian pulpits as expounders of the word of God, and yet doubt or deny the truth of Christ's divinity! May God grant that our own realization of the blessed truth may be deepened by our reflections; that our grasp of the overwhelming grandeur of the Christ may be strengthened; that our love for Him, who is "our God and our all," may be inflamed, until every throbbing pulse of our hearts becomes

[1] Keating in *Cath. Encyc.* s. v. Christianity, p. 716.

an act of thrilling and enthralling homage to Him!

What, then, are the grounds of our faith in Christ's divinity? First of all, let us open our ears and our hearts to "A Voice Crying in the Wilderness" of the world and bearing to all mankind the message of the transcendent dignity of Jesus of Nazareth. But even before this, let us look at a picture, for it is a type, painted by the hand of the evangelist. Mind, I put it before you as a picture, not as an argument, since at present our argument is to be quite different.

In the days before the manifestation of the Christ, John the Baptist, the son of Zachary of the priestly line of Aaron, had prepared himself by solitude and prayer and penance for his great work as forerunner of the Christ. To the country of the Jordan he came and stirred to the depths of their being the vast throngs, which came forth from town and hamlet and city to listen to his eloquent exhortations. And his fiery words, not soft with caressing sweetness, but fierce with reproaches and terrible with

threats, pierced their way to the centre of stricken hearts. "Do penance: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand": [1] the King is about to come to His own. John freely confessed that he was not the Christ: he was but the precursor, and his message was: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." [2] Yes, as Lord and God he announced Him who was to come after him, the latchet of whose shoe he was not worthy to loose.[3] And lo! one day among the crowd that came for the baptism of penance John saw Jesus; and after the contest between his humility and his reverential obedience had been fought and won, he baptized the Christ with the baptism of penance. And behold! as Jesus came forth from the waters of the river, the heavens were opened and the Spirit of God rested upon Him in the form of a dove, and from the riven skies above came the voice of the Eternal: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." [4]

John, as well as the Christ, heard the

[1] Matt. III, 2.
[2] Matt. III, 3.
[3] John I, 27.
[4] Matt. III, 17.

words. And the next day, when once again Jesus drew near to the Baptist, the latter said to his disciples: "Behold the Lamb of God; behold him who taketh away the sin of the world," and that none but God could do: and he added: "This is the Son of God."[1] Yes, later he turned his disciples to the Christ, of whom he said: "He must increase, but I must decrease. He that cometh from above is above all. . . . He that receiveth his testimony, hath set to his seal that God is true. For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God. . . . He that believeth in the Son, hath life everlasting; but he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth upon him."[2]

This was the glorious testimony of John, who had said to the emissaries of the Sanhedrim in answer to their query about his own person and mission that he was "a voice of one crying in the wilderness."[3] Yet it is not to the testimony of this voice in the wilderness, to which I call your attention

[1] John I, 29, 34.
[2] John III, 30 ff.
[3] John I, 23.

now. Clear and compelling was this voice; glorious, the message; holy, the person of him who bore the tidings from on high. But more resonant than trumpet call is the voice, unfaltering with the dazzling light of God's own truth is the message, sacred with the blessedness of heaven's approbation is the person, that I place before you, —the voice, the message, the person of the Catholic Church with her testimony to the Christ.

For even as John, who gloried to style himself "the friend of the Bridegroom,"[1] stood in the wilderness of Judea and pointed out the Christ as the Son of God, so through all the days that have passed since her birth to life the Church, the Bride of the Bridegroom, has called through the vast wilderness of the wide world to all the sons and daughters of men and has borne the testimony, "Indeed this man is the Son of God." And her testimony is true.

This is the ground of our faith in Christ's divinity to which I am at present directing

[1] John III, 29.

your attention. In outline the argument comes to this: we know that Jesus Christ is divine because the Church says that He is, and because the stamp of God's approval is upon what she says. Yet, let us look more closely, so as to see more clearly the full force of the argument.

One way of proceeding in the apologetic examination of fundamental truths is to begin with the stupendous dignity of Christ's divine personality; then to study the institution which He founded for the continuance of His mission upon earth, and thus to arrive at the truth that the Catholic Church is His supreme masterpiece. Such a method is strictly reasonable and leads to incontrovertible truth. This, however, is not our present line of thought; for to start with such an assumption and then to return upon our steps and prove our assumptions by the very conclusions to which those assumptions led us, would be to violate the canons of logical procedure. No; now we are to look upon the Church as a great fact in the world of today and of the past, and

we begin our argument from the consideration of this fact.

It is not necessary to refer to a single word of the gospel narrative about the Christ or about the Church. Even had the gospel records perished; even if, under another providence of God, they had never been penned; even though at the outset of our investigations we knew nothing about Jesus Christ, not even the fact of His existence, much less the overwhelming magnificence of His personality,—we could turn our eyes upon the Church as an undeniable and striking fact in the world, and from the consideration of this fact we could find our way to the truth of Christ's divinity.

In thus looking at the Church we need go back no farther than the middle of the second century. I mention this term, since even the head and front of the rationalistic school, Adolph Harnack, admits that from this time onward the Christian Church is essentially identical with the Catholic Church of today. And, as we look at the Church now and in her wonderful past we

realize that she is, as the Vatican Council declares, "a standard set up unto the nations," [1] to point the way to the truths of God, since she bears stamped upon her being the credentials which mark her out as God's own ambassador to men.

Let rationalists have recourse to the most arbitrary assumptions and to the most erratic processes of thought; they cannot explain by natural means her wondrous continuance and superhuman propagation. In all this the Church is more than human. And therefore for an explanation of her enduring vitality one is logically forced to have recourse to the special intervention of God. By this moral miracle, which is God's own approving testimony to her, she is proved to be the herald of God's word, the legate of the Most High,—and as a consequence she is truthful in the message which she bears to men. Now, the very heart of that message is that Jesus Christ is very God. This she tells us over and over again: it is the central truth of her whole doctrinal teaching to mankind.

[1] Denz. 1794. Isaias XI, 12.

More than this does she tell us. She tells us about the reliability of the early records of her history, about the nature and dignity and wondrous work of Him whom she proclaims as her Founder, about His relations to the Persons of the august Trinity. And in all this she is worthy of our humble acquiescence of mind. But the only point in this her testimony, to which we need now attend, is the central fact of the divinity of Jesus Christ; and in this her witness is true with the truth of God.

There is the argument in general. Yet it will be well to look at it more in detail, so as to grasp the full force of the conclusion that the Church is a fact which goes beyond the power of human means to accomplish, that consequently God has sealed her as His legate approved by His own sanction, and that her testimony is vouched for by God Himself.

The pagan writers, Tacitus, Suetonius, and Pliny, refer to the origin of the Christian Church, which is ascribed by them to the very first century of the present era. From the humblest beginnings the Church

spread so rapidly and so widely that in the middle of the second century St. Justin could say with truth: "There is no class of men . . . among whom there are not prayers and thanksgivings to the Father and Creator of all through the name of Jesus Christ crucified."[1] About the same time St. Irenaeus bears witness that there were Christian Churches in Germany, in Gaul, in the Orient, in Egypt, in Lybia, as well as in Palestine. At the beginning of the third century Tertullian could say: "We are of yesterday, and we have filled every place that was yours,—your cities, islands, fortresses, towns, councils, even the camps of your armies . . . the palace, the senate, the forum: we have left you only your temples."[2] And on and on through the succeeding years the Church continued to spread out over the whole world, wherever there was a human woe to solace or a human soul to save.

And her march of triumph was made in the midst of conflicts and in spite of diffi-

[1] *Dialogue with Tryphon*, 117.
[2] *Apologeticus*, c. 37.

culties from within and from without. Until the fourth century the Church, the young but prolific mother, had to face all the might of Rome, as the mistress of the nations hunted her from the face of the earth and tried to drown her in the blood of her children. She fought the fierce cruelty of Rome with the invincible patience of her martyrs, unnumbered save by the God for whom they died. Young and old, weak and strong, humble and noble, unlike in everything except their sublime loyalty, they offered themselves with the unconquerable heroism of God's lovers and triumphed by failure. Their very differences, the absence of any human motive that could nerve so many for the supreme struggle, point to God as the author of their firmness in testifying to the truth. Hope of human renown, the power of fanaticism,—these were conspicuous by their absence: and where one Christian fell, another, nay, many others rose to take his blood-stained place. "The more you cut us down with the sickle of death," Tertullian glories, "the more numerous do we become: the seed is the

blood of Christians."[1] So it was for three centuries drenched in blood. And when these years of ensanguined conflict had passed, the Church came forth from the Catacombs stronger and more buoyant with life than ever before, and she continued her victorious march down the ages.

Then the tide of barbarian invasion rolled down from the North. Rome that "sat upon her seven hills and from her throne of beauty ruled the world" was swept away before the onrushing tide. But from the turbulent waters of revolt and barbarism the Church's form rose majestic and beautiful: she held forth her hand above the dark and seething waves, and gradually there came a great calm. She conquered her conquerors: she made them her children, fierce and wild and often falling back into their old ways of savagery, but in the depths of their half tamed hearts docile to her. She molded them into the beginnings of Christian civilization by forcing down into the depths of their savage consciousness the realization of the eternal principles of right and justice,

[1] *Apologeticus*, c. 50.

of reverence for authority, of consideration for the weak by the strong.

Had the Church been anything less than the work of God with God's strong might behind her, sealing her with the seal of omnipotence, she would have died with the civilization that passed away with the empire of the Cæsars. But she lived on, and she lives today stronger and mightier than ever, whilst the pathway of history is strewn with the lifeless remains of every human institution of those days of long ago. Can Roman polity explain all this, as the rationalists claim that it can? Why, then, was it that Roman polity could not save Rome herself? Can the power of Greek philosophic thought account for the marvel? Why, then, did Grecian thought fall in utter ruin before the onslaught of universal desolation? No; it was God's hand that sustained His own beloved Church.

Nor were the only difficulties that faced her those which came from the red right hand of physical might. The Church had fought with paganism, and paganism was all but dead: she had struggled against the

apotheosis of the State in the persons of the emperors; she had fought against the heathen worship of the civil power, and she had conquered by the omnipotence of God. But from within her own bosom there sprang forth children, who were traitors to the truth; and against these too her loyal strength was turned. As Newman says, the conflict of Christianity was "with the old established paganism, which was almost dead before Christianity appeared; with the Oriental Mysteries, flitting wildly to and fro like spectres; with the Gnostics, who made knowledge all in all, despised the many, and called Catholics mere children in the truth; with the Neo-Platonists, men of literature, pedants, visionaries, or courtiers; with the Manichees, who professed to seek truth by Reason, not by Faith; with the fluctuating teachers of the school of Antioch, the time-serving Eusebians, the reckless, versatile Arians; with the fanatic Montanists and harsh Novatians, who shrank from Catholic doctrine, without power to propagate their own. . . . Had Christianity been as these sects, it would have dissolved into them; but

it had that hold of the truth which gave its teaching a gravity, a directness, a consistency, a sternness and a force to which its rivals . . . were strangers."[1]

Yes, heresy after heresy sprang forth from the pride-blinded souls of her unworthy children; but she cut away the gangrene: the living stock was stronger than ever, but the lopped-off branches are dead or are dying. The heresies I have named have all but disappeared. Arianism has vanished: Nestorianism lives a dying life in a few deluded adherents: Eutychianism has passed away: Protestantism from the day of its birth entered upon the period of doctrinal dissolution; and the fight is once more between the Church and an ever renewed paganism. And in this fight she will conquer, as she has conquered in the past.

Against all her foes, then, from within and from without, the Church marched on triumphant. And she won her way, not by the force of arms, but by the strength of humility and the might of charity; not by appealing to carnal pleasures, but by urging

[1] *Development of Doctrine*, VIII.

the abnegation proper to the followers of the Crucified; not by human eloquence, but by her testimony to the message given her from the beginning. By reason of all this she is as different from Mahometanism and from Buddhism, as light is from darkness, as life is from death. Her doctrine, whilst answering to the highest of the lawful longings of human nature, contained, as it does today in its unchanging holiness, many things from which proud minds and corrupt hearts shrank back in horror. She stood for humility in a world gone mad with pride; for detachment in a world which adored the power of wealth and the splendor of magnificence; for purity in a world that was a seething brothel of lustful excesses. And, once again, she conquered.

Effects such as these go beyond the power of attainment of the mightiest of earthly forces. Yet were the power of earth and the might of genius at work in the accomplishment of these marvels? Far from it. It was the weak things of this world that God used to confound the strong; the foolish things to bring to naught the wise, that the

glorious outcome of it all might be attributed to its true cause, namely, the ever-present and marvelous help of the Most High God.[1]

And note it well, throughout and after all these struggles the Church does not merely cling to a faintly flickering spark of life. She lives and exults with the plenitude of strength and is ever young in her majestic beauty. She has not been and is not a tottering organization, enfeebled by expansion, or strong only in the paucity of her numbers. With the close-knit force of a solid battle-line she moves to her destiny: with the firmness of superhuman strength in unbreakable unity she advances to her greater and greater universality.

Well indeed does the Vatican Council say of her: "By reason of her wonderful propagation, her surpassing holiness and inexhausted fecundity in all good things, by reason of her catholic unity and her unconquered stability, the Church herself is a great and perpetual motive of credibility and an irrefragable testimony to her own

[1] Cf. I. Cor. I, 27 ff.

divine mission."[1] "Her inexhausted fecundity in all good things!" Of a truth, this is a marvel worth considering. Whilst not primarily concerned with the temporal concerns of her children, the Church sowed the seeds of civilization and true progress, as she guarded and spread the principles of justice and charity. Every form of human need and human misery has found assistance from her. She began hospitals and schools and asylums for the outcasts and homes for the friendless. Homes, I say; homes, because of the warmth of Christian charity, not merely shelters, left cold by even the best efforts of pagan philanthropy. Her face was sternly set against the enslavement of man by man, and by her doctrine of man's adoptive sonship to God she prepared the way for the abolition of this horrible traffic in human beings.

But all the while her eyes were fixed upon the heavenly home, to which she was calling and leading her children. If anything of earth counted, it was because of its relation to eternity: if anything material was of

[1] Denz. 1794.

value, it was because of the spiritual worth to which it led or with which it was connected. Holiness was the object for which she labored with her own "surpassing holiness."

And through all the ages her holiness was dazzling with a splendor surpassing the attainment of human power by its own unaided self or even with the assistance of God's ordinary graces. Over and over again, as history's pages were being filled, the evil lives of many of the Church's own with their unbounded love of money and their fiercer longing for place and power, which led the way to the terrible abuses of simony and corruption, would have brought death to any institution not sustained by divine omnipotence. Yet she was sustained, and her holiness shone forth through the dark mists of evil. The faithless wantonness of many of her children cast a stain upon her robe of innocence undefiled; but it could not eclipse her overwhelming sanctity. The vile scum of infidelity and evil could not obscure the pure gold of heavenly devotedness to God in the souls of those who

were in striking numbers and were nearest and dearest to her heart.

Thousands upon thousands of her sons and daughters turned their backs upon the riches and pleasures and honors of the world and peopled the deserts of Egypt and Lybia, or made a desert for themselves in the midst of the crowded haunts of men, in order to follow after a perfection to which the Church invited them in the name of the Master. Were the number small and insignificant, were it all a mere passing phenomenon flaring forth in the lives of a few fanatics, this might be explained by nature alone. But nature cannot explain the fact of almost uncounted multitudes of sober, serious-minded, well-balanced, bright and joyous souls thus consistently acting against the promptings of the deepest longings of the human heart.

And furthermore, to this mighty army of holy ones there must be added the truly heroic figures of those spiritual giants, who in unbroken continuity have shown forth the surpassing holiness of complete consecration to God in the forms of service which

are hardest to flesh and blood and touch the heights of the sublime;—a holiness too, to which the stamp of God's most special intervening approbation has not been wanting, as the flowers of miracles sprang up along the path they trod. Such sanctity as this is not of earth, but of heaven: it breathes forth the sweet odor of the celestial home of God's own dwelling: and as we gaze upon it, we must exclaim with humbled hearts: "The finger of God is here."

As this surpassing holiness points to God as its only complete author, so too does the unbroken catholic unity of this same Church in her progress through all the ages and over all the lands of earth. That an organization, small in numbers and holding to doctrines and disciplinary enactments quite in accordance with human inclinations, should spread over a considerable extent of time or territory, or should be imposed on men by the might of armed force,—this is altogether within the scope of natural powers. But that a Church should go down the pathway of history consistent with herself in submission to the same teaching author-

ity, which imposes doctrines that cut deep down into the heart of nature's longings; that she should spread out to the farthest corners of this old earth of ours, embracing among her children not one nation only, but all nations, men of the most divergent characters, with temporal interests utterly different; that without the power of physical coercion, but solely by the force of moral means, she should preserve this unity as strong and steady as when she began her colossal expansion,—this is a moral miracle, which cries to God as its author.

For, human independence tends of itself to dissociation; and the history of the sects, which rejected the Church's authoritative teaching power, shows forth the same lesson and points to the same moral. Whilst they are shattered into separate units, she in her universal spread continues one and the same. So, in the light of human failure to accomplish unity in universality, the Catholic Church's unity marks her again as the ambassador of God.

There, then, stands the Church, splendid in achievements above the attainment of hu-

man endeavor. There she stands with the glorious aureola of divine approbation about her brow, with the seal of God's testimony stamped upon her words,—the herald of God to the world, the legate of the Most High to earth, the witness of the Eternal to the sons of men. Yes, her testimony is the testimony of God: what she speaks, she speaks with the authority of God; for He has placed His mark upon her. Hence we are justified, nay, if we would be true to ourselves and to our Lord, we are forced to hearken to her, as she speaks her message from heaven about herself, her records, her Founder and His doctrine.

But the only point of her testimony which concerns us here and now is that which touches the Christ. And what is that testimony? She says that Christ is divine. All through the ages she has said it: with all the force of her heaven-blessed being she has always preached it as the very soul of her doctrine. She stood for it against the early heretics. Against the Arians she defined it in the Nicene Council, as she declared the Son consubstantial with the Father,—and

the Son is the Christ. She hurled the bolt of anathema upon Nestorius and Eutyches in the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon, as she proclaimed Christ's unity of divine personality in the two natures, divine and human. Yes, she has ever cried aloud through the wilderness of the world: "Behold the Lamb of God; behold him who taketh away the sin of the world. . . . This is the Son of God."

And to this voice of hers all mankind must hearken. For, if this word, which she speaks, is not true with the truth of God, and if Jesus Christ is not really God, then either the Church is mistaken or she has lied. If she has been mistaken, God Himself has stood sponsor for the error: if she has lied, God Himself has lied, since He has placed the seal of His miraculous approbation upon her testimony. And if God has been mistaken, He is not all-wise: if God has lied, He is not all-truthful. In either case He is not God,—there is no God, and mankind is but the plaything of a blind fate without purpose here, without hope hereafter. To stand for such horrible tenets is to make a

hideous caricature of human nature; it is to stultify human reason; it is to hurl foul blasphemy in the face of God.

In the following lectures we shall look at this same matter of the divinity of Christ from another angle. We shall study the question of the historical claims of an historical person as set forth in historical documents. We have already heard the "Voice in the Wilderness," and from that voice of the Church we have learned the truth, at which we shall again arrive as we tread another path.

Jesus of Nazareth is truly God. To Him the hearts of all mankind are turned, some in hatred, some in indifference, some in burning loyalty and absorbing love. He is the one sufficient bond of true civilization: He is the one forceful condition of real progress: He is the one sustaining hope of humanity. The solace for the woes of men must be sought for in Him: the solution of the questions of social needs, the ending of the battle of labor and capital, the attainment of the goal of legitimate desires for earthly happiness, as well as for celestial

bliss, must be looked for and found in Him.

He is in very deed the Way, the Truth, and the Life: and, as Thomas à Kempis says, "without the way there is no going; without the truth there is no knowing; without the life there is no living."[1] Without Him we are nothing: with Him we are lifted up beyond the littleness of self. To Jesus Christ, the Most High God, be everlasting honor and glory and worship! To Jesus Christ, the most human of the sons of men, be loyal affection and thrilling love from every one of the children of mankind! In Him are joy and contentment and solace on earth: in Him are the hope and the realization of everlasting bliss in the eternal mansions of God.

[1] Bk. III, c. 56.

LECTURE II

THE ARCHIVES OF TRUTH

Can find Christ without gospels. These records open another way. Historical proofs: moral certainty: conditions for acceptance. Gospels reliable history. Integrity of present state of records: old manuscripts: translations: citations. Genuinity: admission of critics: ancient testimonies. Historicity. Adversaries. Proof: evangelists knew truth: told it. To reject gospels is to reject all historical knowledge.

To speak of the desire of the human mind for truth and of its capacity for attaining it is to refer to what is almost self-evident. Yet to recall both the one and the other is not without its advantages, since many even of the things which are almost self-evident are denied by some foolish wise ones, who flatter themselves upon their accomplishments or glory in their fancied originality of genius. Yes, the mind is made for truth, and by the force of its natural powers it tends to the attainment of that truth. In

the light of the glory of all that falls within the compass of the mind's grasp,—things of the spirit as well as those of sense, eternity as well as time, God and the things of God as well as the littleness of human happenings,—a touch of reverential awe should silence flippancy into respect.

There is a sacredness about this longing for truth; and there is a something of reverence demanded for the sources from which this truth flows. History is one of these sources. I speak not of the distortions of ignorance or malice, but of real history; of the unvarnished accounts of what is before and beyond our personal experience; of that history which Cicero called "the teacher of our lives." And the special history, to which I would now direct your attention, is the veracious record of the gospels, the "Archives of Truth."

In beginning our investigations about the foundations of our Christian faith I said with truth, that, even if we had no word of the gospel record, we could come to the sure knowledge of the sacred dignity of Jesus Christ,—and this, from the heaven-ap-

proved testimony of the Catholic Church, as she proclaims to all the world and to every age the truth about Him whom she adores as her God. Without referring to the gospels, which tell of her founding and her prerogatives, but looking upon her as an undeniable fact in the world,—a fact, which cannot be explained without the direct intervention of miraculous power from God,—we may hearken to her as she speaks as God's approved messenger with a message to mankind. And the burden of that message is that Jesus Christ is really and truly the very Son of God. Her "voice in the wilderness" of the world calls us to "the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world." This way to the Christ through the Church is one which can be followed by the unlearned as well as by the scientific expert; and this is as it should be, since God's truth is not reserved for the mighty intellects of the giants of thought, but is meant also for the little ones and the unlettered plodders of the world.

So, we can find the Christ the Son of God even without the gospels. But,—and God

be thanked for it!—we have the gospel records; and they blaze another trail whereby learned and unlearned may come to the true knowledge of Him who is the centre of all history. The method of investigation which we are now beginning, is one in which we concern ourselves with an historical personage, who according to the records of real history made certain definite claims, the historical proofs of which we examine.

I say, we are concerned with an historical personage; for, to begin with, Jesus of Nazareth is that. It is hardly necessary for me even to refer to the wild vagaries of men like W. B. Smith and Arthur Drews (the first of whom, to the shame of our country be it said, was an American), who are senseless enough to deny the historical existence of Jesus Christ.

They say that Christ never lived, and they speak of the "myth of Jesus." Any one who can deny the very existence of Christ stands in need not so much of historical instruction as of critical education, of elementary philosophical training, and of plain common sense. If he had these, he would

recognize that a religious movement, appearing in a determined historical epoch in a country and a people well known from numberless documents; a movement, impelling countless men of known times and abodes to almost endless writings; a movement, shaping the most stupendous change in the soul-life of the world that has ever occurred, could not be the result of vague myths recklessly turned into so-called history by nameless dreamers, but must have come forth from a personage of overwhelming power. The folly of such faddists as Smith and Drews may serve by contrast as a lesson in historical investigation and as a call to wisdom.

Since, in studying the claims of Christianity as based on Christ's divinity, we are to consider an historical subject, it will be well to call attention here to the nature of the proofs to be adduced and to the quality of the certainty at which we shall arrive. In all historical questions the certainty attained is a moral certainty. The conclusion is not like the deduction of a mathematical demonstration nor like the findings of

a metaphysical disquisition. Still, it is more than a mere probability: it is a real certainty.

Yet it is a certainty, which is based neither upon metaphysical nor physical laws, but upon moral laws, that is, upon the constant way in which men act in given conditions unfailingly though freely. Such a moral law, for instance, is this, that men do not lie, when no advantage will result to them from the falsehood. Some one man may indeed lie just for the pleasure of lying (that is the reason which he proposes to himself), or else merely to show that he can do what he pleases; but men in general or in any considerable number will not lie without advantage to themselves. Is this only a probability? No; it is a certainty, based upon the very nature of man and firm with the strength of the providence of God, who for the good of mankind must and does watch over the observance of these moral laws.

Some proofs there are that force the assent of the mind, as does the truth that two and two make four. Such proofs none but a madman can deny. Moral proofs do not

force the assent of the mind: they draw it. As a consequence of this nature of moral proofs certain dispositions are necessary, in order that they may produce their full effect. Prejudice or passion, blind hatred or weak fear may leave a man wandering in the darkness even in the midst of the light of solid moral proofs. Hence prejudices must be put aside; for if a man has resolutely made up his mind that miracles, for instance, are quite impossible, no weight of testimony of the most authoritative witnesses will make him change his position. Passion too must be checked; for, especially in religious inquiry, lust and pride will turn the mind away from truth because of the consequences that flow from its blessed, but austere bounty.

In the place of these, the love of truth, of which I spoke in the beginning, must lead one by the hand into the promised land of truth, flowing with the milk and honey of God's benedictions. In this matter we have in all reality a case of "peace on earth to men of good will." May the good Lord increase within our souls and the souls of all

men the humility of mind, which is the beginning of greatness, and the sincere simplicity of longing for the truth, which is the fountain-source of deep knowledge in the things of God and man!

Because we are to consider the history of Jesus of Nazareth with His claims and the proofs of those claims, we must first of all establish the records from which we derive our knowledge concerning Him and His claims. And so, we shall now consider "The Archives of Truth," which are the gospels. All the writings of the New Testament might well be taken for our study. These New Testament writings contain the four gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the fourteen epistles of St. Paul, one of St. James, two of St. Peter, three of St. John, one of St. Jude, and the Apocalypse of St. John,—twenty-seven in all, all written in Greek with the exception of the gospel according to St. Matthew, the original of which was written in Aramaic. However, it will be sufficient for our purpose and much more conducive to the end before us, by reason of the simplicity of consideration, to confine

ourselves to the four gospels, and to show that they are reliable historical documents.

Ordinarily we speak of "the gospels," in the plural number; yet it would be more correct to speak of "the gospel," in the singular number, as St. Irenaeus did, when he called it the "gospel four in form, one in spirit." Gospel means good tidings, truly the tidings of great joy, since it means the story of the redemption with the Apostolic preaching of that work of Christ's love. So, it stands for the written history of the life and work of Jesus Christ as set forth by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. We say "the gospel according to St. Matthew," "the gospel according to St. Mark" and so forth, rather than "the gospel of St. Matthew," "the gospel of St. Mark" and the like, because the good tidings are not those of Matthew or Mark, but the message of Jesus Christ as set forth by His disciples.

The four gospels are a sacred heritage. They contain sweetness, which has taken away from millions of souls the bitterness of life: they are filled with celestial manna, nay, they are bread from heaven, holding all

savor for mankind: they are, in truth, a letter to men from God Himself, the very word of the Father of all to the children of His love. Yes, they are all that. But,—and let us note it well,—at this point of our investigations we do not look upon the gospels as the inspired word of God; nor can we do so now, if we wish to be logical in our inquiry. We consider them as human documents with human authority as to historical facts. In a word, we claim for them the same kind of respect, though in greater measure, as is readily given to authentic history, like the Annals of Tacitus or Cæsar's Commentaries on the Gallic War.

The gospels merit this sincere acceptance, if they are substantially the same as they proceeded from the hands of their authors; if the original works belonged to the epoch to which they are attributed and to the men who stand as their writers; and if these men were possessed of the qualities, which make the words of any witness of real value, that is, if they knew what they were writing about and truthfully set down the record of what they knew. It shall be our pur-

pose, then, to look into these matters honestly and candidly, and to draw the conclusions which can be drawn from any sound moral proof.

The gospels as we have them are not, of course, the originals as they proceeded from the hands of their authors; for these perished at a very early date. From these originals transcripts or copies were made, in order that a greater and greater number of persons might benefit by the story of the good tidings to men. Now that we have the printing-press with its power of unlimited reproduction of the same text, it is comparatively easy to multiply copies of a text without error. But when we consider that each new copy of the gospels was made by hand, the possibility of some errors creeping in, even in spite of the care of the most diligent scribe, becomes at once apparent. As a consequence we do not say that in our gospels there has been no alteration from the original text. What we do maintain is, that, as far as the substantial matter of the gospel is concerned, there has been no corruption or falsification of the original text.

To hold for more than this would be to demand without warrant that God should have worked a continual miracle to prevent the copyist from omitting a word or a line, from substituting one word or letter for another. Such an omission or such a substitution might easily have happened, especially when there was question of copying from a badly written text or from a codex in a perishing condition. It need not, therefore, surprise any sincere student of the truth to know that the number of variations in the different codices, which have come down to us, mounts up into the thousands. Some put the number of minor differences as high as one hundred and fifty thousand; but most of these are differences of spelling, of grammatical form, of the order of words, and such like minutiae. As far as the sense is concerned, hardly one-thousandth part of the New Testament can be looked upon as critically uncertain.

Among the parts about which critical difficulties have been raised there is the passage about the bloody sweat of Christ in the garden of Gethsemani; the story of the woman

taken in her sin; the incident of the angel descending into the probatic pool. None of these has any particular value from the apologetic standpoint, since no fundamental truth about Christ or His work depends on them. These passages are not at all to be rejected; but even if they were, any argument drawn from the gospels as touching the foundations of Christian belief would stand in unimpaired strength. Another passage, which has apologetic value and is contested by some, is the close of the gospel according to St. Mark. But even if this were excluded (which it should not be by any manner or means), the full equivalent of it is found in St. Matthew. In fine, the Trinitarian form of baptism is contested by some, as by Loisy and his kind; as also the Magnificat, as attributed to Mary rather than to Elizabeth: but the objections, at least against the first of these fragments, which alone can concern us now, arise simply and solely from preconceived ideas as to what the story of Christ ought to be, and are without any objective value.

To a mind, which does not shun the truth,

the reasons that establish the substantial integrity of the gospel text are completely satisfying. In fact, if the number of codices is considerable and very ancient and scattered over a great part of the earth, it is manifestly impossible for any concerted falsification of all of them to have taken place,—the more so if there were other external checks upon the accuracy of the transmission of the sense of the original writing. Now, this is precisely what we find with reference to the gospel record.

Up to the present there are known almost four thousand Greek manuscripts of the New Testament: more than a hundred of these are older than the tenth century: the most ancient of them, four in number, go back to the fourth or fifth century. And in all of these there is substantial agreement. Do we realize what this means? It means that the gospels are accredited, as are no other old historical writings which are in existence and are admitted today. Where is the critic who denies the accuracy of the copies of Cæsar's Commentary about the war which so long ago raged over the very

ground where today the nations of the world are in the death grip? Who denies the correctness of the transcripts of the histories of Thucydides and Tacitus and Livy? No one. Yet,—and note it well,—of the manuscript copies of Cæsar only one goes back to the ninth century, a few to the tenth or twelfth. A great part of the Annals of Tacitus exists in a single codex. The oldest of the copies of Thucydides is thirteen hundred years younger than the original; the oldest of the copies of Cæsar, nine hundred years: whereas two of the codices of the gospel (the Sinaiticus and the Vaticanus) are only three hundred years distant in time from the original document. If, then, the integrity of these other histories is uncontested, on what reasonable grounds can the substantial identity of the gospel writings with the original documents be denied?

In further confirmation of the same conclusion we have the many ancient translations of the gospels into languages other than the Greek. There is the Latin Vulgate, in use since the sixth century, having been revised in the fourth century by St.

Jerome from the Old Itala, which goes back to the second century. There are the Sahidic and old Syriac translations, which belong to the third and possibly even to the second century. All of these are in substantial agreement with the gospels as we have them today.

Again, even if we were to lose all these documents, it would be possible almost to reconstruct the gospels from the excerpts and citations from them, which are found in the works of the Fathers and ecclesiastical writers of the first three centuries. Freedom from corruption is also guaranteed by the supreme care to preserve from the slightest taint the writings which were looked upon as sacred. This care was especially remarkable in the official guardians of the Christian Church, and had so gone down into the souls of the faithful that contemporaneous history records more than one revolt as the result of the change of so little as one word in the text, which the people were accustomed to hear and which they loved with all the ardor of their generous spirits.

Without the slightest fear of credulity, then, we may look upon the records of the gospels, as we have them today, as in substantial agreement with the documents which came forth from the hands of the authors. Their integrity is assured.

Let us turn our attention to the second question, as to when and by whom the gospels were written. A half a century ago it was thought necessary in order to have any reputation for learning among non-Catholic "Higher Critics" to place the composition of the gospels well on into the second century, in order to allow time for the evolution, which was looked upon as the first principle in the discussion. Now, whilst a history written a hundred or two hundred years after the events narrated could still be history of the purest quality, if its statements were guaranteed by indisputable proofs, still Catholic scholars braved the thunderbolts of wrath and the scornful anathemas of the self-constituted wise ones, and clung to the truth of tradition as to the date and authorship of the gospels.

And time has justified their position.

For, today the tide of rationalistic criticism has been swept back and still back, until it no longer rushes beyond the limits fixed by the statements of long ago. Renan, Holtzmann, Juelicher, Schmiedel, Harnack, Loisy, Reinach, the representatives of the most liberal and rationalistic criticism, have been practically forced to admit that the gospel according to St. John was composed not later than the year 125, and most probably between 90 and 100 A. D.; and that the other three gospels date from as early as the period between the years 50 and 70 A. D. Without going into the technical proofs upon which these conclusions are based, the fact to be noted is this, that the gospels admittedly belong to a period well within the lifetime of multitudes who had hearkened to the Christ and been stirred by His teachings which shook the land, well within the mortal life of many of those who had been His faithful followers.

This admission, forced from the rationalist critics, is in complete accord with the tradition based upon testimonies from before the end of the second century. These

testimonies include Tatian's Syriac version of the four gospels under the name of the Diatessaron (four-fold gospel); the versions of the separated churches; the Syriac Peschito; the Curetonian manuscript, named after the learned Englishman who found it in 1858; and the Sinaitic codex, discovered in 1892 by Miss Lewis and her sister.

Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Irenaeus, the Muretorian canon,—all these tell the same tale. And before this time there is St. Justin; there is Papias; there are the references of Clement, Hermas, Ignatius, Polycarp, and others, the mere catalogue of whom would be for many an almost meaningless recital of names. The result of all these testimonies is overwhelming in the certainty that the gospels were written at the time assigned to them. And furthermore, though in itself it makes no material difference whether or not a book was written by the one whose name it bears, if only it is clear that it puts facts before us in a trustworthy manner, still the full light of the testimony of these same witnesses is flashed upon the truth that the gospels were writ-

ten by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

And this weight of authority from the days of old, supporting the genuinity of the gospel writings, is an added reason for certainty about the integrity of the text. For, these witnesses claimed that the gospels, as they had them in the second and third centuries, were written in Apostolic times by the four named evangelists; and this claim supposes that the writings had come down to them substantially uncorrupted.

Two facts, therefore, are firmly established, namely, that the gospel records, as we have them, are substantially incorrupt, and that they were written by those to whom they are attributed very close to the events described. And now we come to the battle-ground where rages the fight, for which all the preceding is but the throwing out of the skirmish-line. What is the value of these records? Are they real and true history? Are they such as to demand the assent of every prudent man, who does not blind his vision with the mists of prejudice or the clouds of pride or sensuality? The answer is, Yes. According to the most unshakable

of moral arguments, which would and do win credence in any other field of thought, and which must be convincing here unless we would make all history impossible, the gospels are reliable historical documents to which we may give unqualified assent.

But, as we make this statement, the ear is almost deafened by the laugh of scornful derision or the cry of angry protest, which arises from the ranks of opponents, rationalistic or modernistic, as they rail against the trustworthiness of the gospels, but particularly against the historicity of the gospel according to St. John. The various shades of their explanations, which do not explain, need not be rehearsed. Suffice it to say that, whether they look upon the gospels as deliberate and scheming lies, as myths and mere symbolical expressions of truth, as the gradual evolution of the Christian conscience "reinterpreting" the original message of Christ, all are of one mind in denying that the four gospels are sober history.

Baur and the extreme Tubingen school with the theory of the twofold contradictory tendency of Christian thought; Strauss with

his arrogant assumption of myths, idealized by the enthusiasm of Christ's disciples; Brandt, Loisy and the like, who in their rejuvenation of Strauss's theory eviscerate the contents of the gospel records according to their arbitrary presuppositions,—all these are at one extreme of the position, which denies the historic value of the gospels. On the other hand, Renan is quite ready to admit the gospel narrative as serious history, except when its contents run counter to his rationalistic and pantheistic tenets. So too are Holtzmann and Harnack, except when there is anything which goes against their case-hardened rejection of the miraculous and the supernatural. Harnack, for instance, says: "There was a time when it was considered necessary to hold . . . the New Testament a tissue of deception and falsehood. That time has now passed. . . . The most ancient literature of the Church is, on all chief points and in the majority of details, veracious and worthy of belief from the point of view of literary history."[1] Note the loophole

[1] Quoted by Batiffol, *The Credibility of the Gospel*, p. 91.

which he leaves for his philosophical prejudices, "on all chief points and in the majority of details," a subterfuge which will allow him to reject arbitrarily any inconvenient text, which clashes with his fixed notions of what the gospel of Christ should be.

None of these men, then, admit candidly and without reservation, that the gospels in their substantial integrity and their genuinity (that we have established) are sober history. Yet this is precisely the point of most vital importance for our present and future considerations. They are true history.

That they should be true history, it is necessary that the evangelists should have known the truth and should have told it; for knowledge and truthfulness are the qualities which give to the testimony of any witness the authority which constitutes a source of certainty.

Did they know what they were writing about? None were better qualified to know than they. Two of them, Matthew and John, were eye-witnesses, who for three

years had been closely associated with Christ in the unbroken intimacy of the public ministry. The other two, Mark and Luke, were the companions of the Apostles, Mark as the disciple of Peter, and Luke as the comrade of Paul and the other Apostles. The facts recorded were things that fell under the observation of the senses, often of a public character and transpiring in the sight of dense throngs. Hallucination on the part of the Apostles and evangelists cannot seriously be proposed as a reasonable tenet. For, many men do not simultaneously suffer from the same hallucination; nor were these men of a character given to such flights of imagination or diseased fancy. They were rude, simple men, slow to believe. And,—strange phenomenon!—the very enemies of Christ would have had to suffer from the same hallucination even with regard to the marvelous events of His ministry, since they did not (for they could not) deny them. Illusion such as this would be as great a wonder as the recorded miracles, to reject which the theory of hallucination was first thought of.

So, the evangelists could see and hear and know the things which they recorded. They were not deceived in this regard. They could tell the truth; for they knew the truth. Did they tell it? or were they deceivers? They told the truth in all its simplicity.

First of all, the narrative itself bears the earmarks of truth. It is simple and straightforward and makes no excuse for proposing even hard things. The gospel record was not indeed intended as a formal biography of the Master. It was meant, so many think, as a resumé of the Apostolic preaching without special regard for the exact order of occurrences, though it is a record of real happenings. The gospels do not hide things which, to a sense of human prudence, would tell against the reputation of the Christ and His Apostles. Even the wonders related are told in a quiet tone of calm assurance and without theatrical expressions of astonishment. If one but compares with the style of the gospel narrators the way in which Flavius Josephus speaks of the Jews, he will see the vast difference between the special pleader of a cause and

the sincere exponent of unvarnished truth. Nay more, the very divergences between the different gospels, accidental and unessential and apparent rather than real, are another proof of the sincerity of the writers. If they had been bent on foisting a deception upon the world, they would have been more careful to observe the rules of human prudence.

The evangelists told the truth; for there was no motive for their lying: and we must remember the moral law, safeguarded by the watchful providence of God, that men do not lie without a motive for lying, without some advantage accruing to them from the deception. This is true quite apart from the common justice, which requires that a lie be proved against a man, rather than that he should prove that he tells the truth. But not only is insincerity not proved against the evangelists: their candid sincerity is established by the most cogent reasons. For, they had no motive for deception.

Could they have hoped for a temporal advantage? Prison, punishment, death awaited the disciples and especially the

preachers of Christ's doctrine from Jews and Gentiles, who looked upon these upstart religionists as the scum of the earth, as the foes of heaven, as the enemies of a glorified State. Truly, the man who would have hoped for earthly favor or advantage from his efforts in the cause of the Crucified Nazarene would have been more than a fool. Could they look for advantage in the world to come by palming off upon a deceived generation a monstrous lie, subversive of the interests of God's truth? The blackest pit of the bottomless abyss of perdition would be a meet reward for such a distortion. No; it was because they held so firmly to the "good tidings," that the disciples of Christ were ready to bear all the hardships of earth. "Great is truth and it must prevail" was the watchword of their heroic loyalty to their message.

Besides, if they had wished to drug the souls of men with the poisoned draught of deceit, they could not have accomplished their fell purpose. The facts, which they recorded, were of a public character: it was to the interest of their opponents to enter a

vigorous and triumphant denial of them, if they were false. To tear the mask away from their monstrous deception would have been a sweet solace to Jewish and Gentile foes, if it could have been done.

Had the evangelists, then, invented the life of Jesus of Nazareth with His sublime doctrine, His unsurpassed morality, His stupendous personality; had they succeeded in hoodwinking their own generation and the generations of the noblest and best of the spirits of mankind that followed; had they thus launched a movement so overwhelming, that it overrode persecution and trial; and had they achieved the conquest of a world for a glaring fraud, they would have been the authors of a marvel so great, that the miracles recorded in the gospel pages would sink into comparative insignificance. And the man, who can believe that they did all this by their own genius, by the unaided force of human activity, and against the providence of God Himself, shows a quaint credulity, which is greater than the faith demanded by the whole-hearted acceptance of Christianity.

So, the conclusion is, that the gospels stand as "The Archives of Truth." Just as we possess them, they are substantially the same as they came forth from the hands of their authors: they are free from essential corruption and interpolations, which would make them other works than those penned by those who wrote them. They are the productions of men who lived in times that touched the time of Jesus of Nazareth, when the work of the Master was a living, breathing thing,—which, for that matter, has never died: they were written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. And these evangelists had knowledge of the things of which they left the record; they knew whereof they wrote: and they told the truth with sincere straightforwardness, which did not wish to deceive, and which could not have deceived, even had there existed a desire to father a tissue of mendacious inventions.

Can any one resist this evidence as to the historical trustworthiness of these archives of truth? Yes; one can resist it, since it rests upon a moral proof, which founds a certainty that is true, but from which one

can draw back. One can resist it; but it is only through the power of prejudice that blinds or the slavery of passion that will not see. But if such a man through prejudice or passion denies to the gospel records the value of sound historical documents, let him bid farewell to all knowledge of events which occurred before his own time or outside of the field of his own individual experience. If he be an historian, let him flout the possibility of any definite scientific historical knowledge. If he be a man in the ordinary occupations of life, let him refuse to have any dealings with his fellowmen in the commercial or social sphere, since he denies the validity of moral laws and the constant ways of human activity; let him close his eyes to the ever-watchful guardianship of a provident God over the ways of men.

And if no man is prepared to act out such follies as these, then let no man refuse to give to the gospels the credence which is deserved by reliable human testimony; for no other human document has the weight of convincing evidence which is theirs. A man

may, even with honesty of purpose, question the conclusions which we are to draw from the story of the life and works of Jesus Christ; but in the name of common honesty, let him not skulk away from the truth, which is vouched for by the veracious account of that blessed life and that sacred work: let him not distort the issue by unworthy twistings. Rather let him with humble heart and sincere desire face the truth and embrace it.

This humility and sincerity should be, and (please God!) will be the attitude of our souls as we take our stand on the firm foundation of the gospels, with prayer in our hearts that all men may see the light of God and that we ourselves may see it ever more clearly. And may that prayer of ours pierce the skies; may it reach the heart of the Master of mercy and win the boon we beg, so that those who have not clasped to their soul's love the sacred record of the gospels may come into their own (for the gospels are meant for all mankind), and may follow whither the kindly light is leading. For, one cannot sincerely admit the

gospels without admitting Christianity: one cannot with candid soul and unprejudiced mind and prayerful heart and humble acceptance of God's proffered grace search their pages without bowing down in the sacredness of faith before Jesus Christ the Son of God, the Savior.

LECTURE III

CHRIST'S CLAIM TO DIVINITY

Historical setting of Christ's life and mission. Political condition: social state: ideals: Israel's hope. Christ's coming. Gradual unveiling of mission and person. Christ's claim: above Law: Lord of Sabbath: pardons sin: demands unbounded loyalty to His person: will judge mankind. The only Son of God. Peter's profession ratified. Before the Sanhedrim. Summary. St. John's record. Christ and the Father one.

In a passage of the gospel according to St. Matthew, to which we must return later, we read that Jesus Christ asked of His Apostles: "Who do men say that the Son of man is? . . . Who do you say that I am?"[1] Their answer shows the variety of opinions which were rife among the Jews. Some called Christ a good man; others denounced Him as little short of a reprobate; some called Him Elias or Jeremias or one of the prophets; Peter called Him the Son of the

[1] Matt. XVI, 13, 15.

living God. And through the ages down to our own day this difference of thought has persisted. Whilst in our present considerations we must indeed touch upon some of these answers of men, we shall go to Christ Himself, and in our turn we shall ask Him: "But you, who do you say that you are?" We shall study the claim which Jesus of Nazareth made with regard to Himself.

In the last lecture we proved the reliability of the gospels, which are the documents to which we have recourse as we study Christ's answer to our question. As we have seen, these gospels have come down to us from the first generations of the Christian Church without any substantial alteration from the originals, as written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. They are trustworthy records: they are serious history of authoritative character. Hence we are altogether justified in taking what is found in their pages as the expression of solid reality. Let us, then, turn to these gospels and learn from them who and what Jesus Christ claimed to be. We are not concerned just now with the validity of His claim. We do

not ask whether He rightly claimed to be what He said He was. We shall reflect upon that point later on. At present we go no farther than the claim itself. Right or wrong, what did He claim to be?

In order to get a clearer idea of the message of Christ, it will be of some help to us to look at the historical setting of His life and mission, as made known to us by the gospel narrative and by other sources of information as to the political, intellectual, and religious makeup of the world to which He came with His message.

Many of the Jews had left Palestine for various foreign lands, where they constituted the numerous gatherings of the "diaspora" or "dispersion." These dispersed Jews had much to do with the disciples of the Master in the days to come; but with the Christ Himself their relations were negligible. The bulk of the chosen people was found in Palestine itself, the Holy Land, which was about the size of Belgium or Sicily. Here in Palestine after the glorious efforts of the Asmonean princes of the family of the Macchabees to bring back the an-

cient splendor of Israel, a long black night of near-anarchy held sway; but finally after a bloody war political unity was established by Herod the Idumean, an alien, cruel and ambitious.

Herod's last will and testament, ratified by Augustus, divided his kingdom between his three sons; Archelaus holding Judea; Herod Antipas (the one who mocked Christ in His Passion) governing Galilee and Perea; Philip exercising power in Iturea and the north-western part of the country. Archelaus was deposed by Augustus after ten years of tyrannical rule, and Judea became a Roman province under a Procurator, who resided at Cæsarea except during the time of the Jewish Pasch. Here in Judea the Sanhedrim, with its seventy members of the chief families and of the priestly line together with the scribes, learned in the Law, and the ancients, who were men of prominence, was the supreme Jewish authority in civil and religious matters. Under the imperial sway of Rome Archelaus' brothers, Herod and Philip, continued to exercise a sort of kingly rule over their ter-

ritory, somewhat after the manner of the Rajahs of India under the high-lordship of England.

As for the people, there were, of course, the "higher classes" and the common folk, from the latter of whom most of Christ's nearer followers were drawn. The higher classes included those who enjoyed a certain prominence and importance by reason of their fortune and position or their learning and knowledge of the Law; and here we may place the scribes, who were the educated class, the "intellectuals" of their day. Besides the Herodians, who were devoted to the Idumean half-kings and were quite content with the sovereignty of Rome as an acceptable solution of the political situation, (for first and foremost they were politicians); besides the Zealots, nationalists before all else and hating foreign domination with all the ardor of fanatical fury; besides the obscure group of Essenians, who were simple-minded dreamers absorbed in the pursuit of moral uprightness, there were two great classes, divided on almost every point, but united at last in combined hatred

and opposition to Christ. These were the Sadducees and the Pharisees.

The Sadducees, materialists and devotees of pleasure, had lost their power under Herod the Great, but had afterwards regained it in large measure. They were from families of the priestly line; they were rich and influential, and held the high-priesthood and most of the principal positions of importance in the Temple. For all that, however, religion had but a very small part in their preoccupations. They were ready to make concessions and to enter into compromises with the power of Rome from motives of self-interest: they hated their upstart rivals, who were growing in the esteem of the country at large through the prestige accruing to them from their strict views about the observance of the Law.

These hated rivals were the Pharisees. They were the very backbone of Judaism. Proud as they were and rigid in the cult of exterior observances, they had largely undermined the influence of the priestly line: puritanical as they were, they still stood for what was best in the religious thought of the

chosen people. They clung to the lofty ideal of the "Kingdom of God through the Messiah," despite the depraved notions which they introduced into it.

With the Romans the highest ideal at this very time, was "the Roman peace," a period of sweet comfort after bloody strife, an era of repose for the world after the long agony of destruction. It was an ideal essentially national, of the earth earthly. The Greeks with their mysticism had turned the thoughts of many from national greatness to individual good in the immortal happiness reserved for virtuous living. Both of these ideals were far surpassed by the hope of Israel, although they may have had their influence in dragging down to a lower plane the high ideal of the people of God.

From Isaias' prophecy [1] the Jews looked for a personal intervention of Jahve in favor of His chosen people: the Messianic hope was to be realized in a stupendous manifestation of the justice of God. From David's words [2] they looked for a King of

[1] Isaias XXXV, 4.
[2] Psalms II, LXXI, CIX, etc.

David's line, who would bring untold felicity to His subjects. Isaias had also told of the sorrows as well as the triumph of the Servant of Jahve,[1] though the Jews would not see in this Sorrowful One the Christ of God. Daniel [2] had spoken of the ruin of the wicked and the establishment of the kingdom of the saints by the Son of Man seated on the clouds of heaven.

The chosen people clung to this ideal; but the salt was losing its savor. With but too many of the Israelites exterior observance was more and more taking the place of prayer and true zeal for God: material interests and worldly preoccupations had gripped the nation's soul. A certain hardness of heart, the offspring of pride and human respect, choked the growth of higher aspirations. The "evil and adulterous generation" [3] must have signs, and signs of their own choosing in the vaults of heaven or in the region of their dreams, signs like the rushing flash of a meteor, ushering in an era of worldly magnificence and earthly

[1] Isaias, LIII, 4–12.
[2] Daniel VII, 13 ff.
[3] Matt. XII, 39.

triumph; and they would not recognize the sign of contradiction hanging lifeless and still upon a blood-stained cross.

As the soul of Israel was languishing to its extinction, there came the call of the Baptist, shrilling like a clarion note across the hills and valleys of Judea, to arouse the people of God before they were stark in death. It was "the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and Philip his brother tetrarch of Iturea . . . under the high-priests Annas and Caiaphas."[1] Jesus of Nazareth was then about thirty years of age, the reputed son of Joseph the carpenter; and Mary was His mother. He received the baptism of penance from John, who called himself His precursor. Then in preparation for His work He went into the desert for His lonely watching and for the struggle between Himself, the King of the Kingdom, and the Great Adversary, the "strong man armed,"[2] the prince of dark-

[1] Luke III, 1, 2.
[2] Luke XI, 21.

ness. When the Baptist was imprisoned by Herod and his trumpet voice no longer rang over the wastes calling to penance, then Christ began His Galilean ministry. "And after that John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God." [1] He began His testimony to His mission and His own personality; but for reasons of sacred prudence He spoke more clearly at first of the Kingdom than of the King, who was Himself.

In our thoughtlessness we might be tempted to ask why Christ did not make an instant and unmistakable and unveiled declaration of the full glory of His mission and person, not only before a chosen few, but before the whole wide world, especially since the Jews were awaiting the Messiah and even the pagan nations held to something of the same hope. But we should be forgetting the circumstances of the times and the historical setting which we have already described. To proclaim Himself before all as the Messiah, without purging the common notion from the disfiguring ex-

[1] Mark I, 14.

crescences that defiled it, would have been to falsify His position: to declare His supreme divine dignity at once and before the providential hour in face of Herodians and Zealots, before Sadducees and Pharisees, would have been to bury in ruin the work which He had to do for all time.

True, He might have overwhelmed every one by stupendous manifestations of majesty and power; but He said explicitly that the Kingdom of God was not to come "with observation," [1] that is, with worldly pomp amid cataclysmic upheavals. He would manifest Himself and His work with the power of God, but with the prudence of man. "The Son of man" was the title by which He most frequently referred to Himself, alluding to Daniel's prophecy of the Messianic advent: and the character of this "Son of man" He manifested step by step. To the well-disposed He made known more and more about the Kingdom, which had the closest relations with His Church, and about Himself, the King: to the ill-disposed there was little more than enigma. His manner

[1] Luke XVII, 20.

of revelation seems to be a living illustration of the economy, to which He referred when He said: "For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, that also which he hath shall be taken away from him."[1]

Remembering, then, this economy of Christ's revelation, and with the gospels before us let us follow the details of Christ's answer to our question, "Who do *you* say that you are?" We are not going to ask whether these gospel records can be relied upon. We have settled that; for they are the archives of truth. From them we are to see and hear Christ make His claim.

In the first chapter of St. Mark we read: "Upon the Sabbath days going into the synagogues he (Christ) taught them. And they were astonished at his doctrine; for he was teaching them as one having power and not as the scribes,"[2] who were mere commentators of the Law. Well might they be astonished at the manner in which Christ spoke, especially when there was reference to the Law.

[1] Mark IV, 25.
[2] Mark I, 21, 22.

Let us remember that Christ spoke to the Jews as a member of their race, as one pulsing with the warm enthusiasms of His country, not as a mummified image or a lifeless spectre. Let us recall too what we know about the place held by the Law among the Jews to whom He spoke. The Law was a thing of reverence for all: for some it had become an object of worship that went to the extent of superstition and apotheosis. All of the Jews subjected every one less than God to the Law: and (it sounds like a myth, but it is history) some of them went so far as to put the Almighty Himself beneath the Law; nay, they represented Him as saying His daily prayer, as having Himself purified by Aaron after contact with Egypt, as purifying Himself with fire after burying the body of Moses. Now, in the presence of these very Jews Jesus Christ places Himself above the Law. He abrogates not only its minor details; but as a supreme Master He lays His hand upon the greater enactments added by Moses himself,—as in the case of divorce. Could His hearers help inferring that He made Himself divine? He does not

speak in the name of God, as did the prophets of old, saying, "Thus saith the Lord": He speaks in His own name and with complete assurance. "You have heard that it was said to them of old: Thou shalt not kill. . . . But *I* say to you: that whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment. . . . You have heard that it was said to them of old: Thou shalt not commit adultery. But *I* say to you: that whosoever shall look upon a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart. . . . You have heard that it hath been said: An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But *I* say to you not to resist evil." [1]

The Pharisees complain against His disciples as violators of the Sabbath, because they plucked ears and ate them; and Christ defends them by reason of their relation to Himself: "But I tell you that there is here a greater than the temple. . . . For the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath," [2] and of the law regarding it.

[1] Matt. V, 21 ff.
[2] Matt. XII, 2 ff.

With divine insight He reads the secrets of hearts; He grants pardon for sin. It is not merely a case of not condemning, as when He tells the woman taken in adultery that He will not condemn her. "Woman, where are they that accused thee? Hath no man condemned thee?" "No man, Lord." "Neither will I condemn thee: go and now sin no more."[1] It is more than this: it is a calm and confident forgiveness, granted without reference to any power other than His own. "And behold they bring to him one sick of the palsy, lying in a bed. And Jesus seeing their faith said to the man sick of the palsy: Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee. And behold some of the scribes said within themselves: He blasphemeth."[2] Yes, they bring as an objection the divine attributes of Jahve, who alone can sound the depths of the heart, who alone can pardon sin, since to Him alone are men accountable. All this is true, and the Master knows it; but they are wrong in branding Him with the charge of blasphemy.

[1] John VIII, 10, 11.
[2] Matt. IX, 2 ff.

And with power, beyond the power of man, Jesus seeing their thoughts says: "Why do you think evil in your hearts? Whether is easier to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee: or to say, Arise and walk." Truly, neither was easier than the other, since both bespoke divine power. "But that you may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, then said he to the man sick of the palsy: Arise, take up thy bed and go into thy house. And he arose and went into his house. And the multitude seeing it feared and glorified God that gave such power to men."

Christ's demands are such as cannot be justified except in the case of divinity. To be persecuted for Him is to suffer for justice.[1] To give testimony to Him is to stand for truth. Loyalty to Him, unreserved and unquestioning, without regard for consequences in this world, yes, unto the extremity of death itself, must be counted joy and gain.[2] Love for Him must outweigh the claims of the deepest and tenderest affection

[1] Matt. V, 11.
[2] Matt. X, 17–33.

of earth; it must be stronger than the love for father or mother or son or daughter.[1] Can claims like these be made by one who holds to have no more than human worth?

Christ never sends men to another greater than Himself: He is the one with whom the whole economy of salvation is wrapped up. "Amen, I say to you, there hath not arisen among them that are born of woman a greater than John the Baptist; yet he that is the lesser in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."[2] And if the children of the Kingdom are greater than the greatest of the prophets of old, what must be the claim of Him who is the King of the Kingdom?

Moreover, Christ says that as the King of the Kingdom *He* will render justice to all men at the last day according to what their relation to Himself has been. "And when the Son of man shall come in his majesty and all the angels with him, then shall he sit upon the seat of his majesty: and all the nations shall be gathered before him, and

[1] Matt. X, 34–40.
[2] Matt. XI, 11.

he shall separate them from one another as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats."[1] Could any intelligence less than that of God unerringly know the whole record of the lives of all the men who have ever lived? Who but God could in a flash of unfailing wisdom thus hold the balance of justice and truth to weigh the lives of all mankind? "Then shall the king say to them that shall be on his right hand: Come ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me to eat: I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink. . . . Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, *you did it to me.* Then shall he say to them also that shall be on his left hand: Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me not to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me not to drink. . . . Amen I say to you, as long as you did it not to one of these my least brethren, *neither did you do*

[1] Matt. XXV, 31, 32.

it to me. And these shall go into everlasting punishment: but the just into life everlasting."[1] To be joined to Jesus is salvation: not to be known by Him is death, aye, everlasting death: "I never knew you" (for my own): "depart from me, you that work iniquity."[2]

And the reason for all these claims is that He is the Son of God. "Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?"[3] were the words of the boy Christ to Mary His Mother. It is well to remark, that it is not from the mere words "the Son of God" that we come to the realization of the sense in which Christ claimed divinity, but from various correlative circumstances as well. Israel too had been called "the son of God"; and every just soul can in a very real sense glory in having God for its Father. But the sonship claimed by Christ is altogether unique.

The whole camp of liberal and rationalist theologians clamor loud and earnestly, that there can be no question of anything more

[1] Matt. XXV, 34–46.
[2] Matt. VII, 23.
[3] Luke II, 49.

than some figurative sonship of Christ in regard to the Deity. The relationship, they say, is merely an intellectual one, in so far as Jesus realized by an experience deeper and broader than that of any other man the fatherhood of God to all mankind; or else a moral one, in so far as Christ was more closely united to the sanctity of the Creator than any other man: but for all that Jesus Christ is merely human. Says Sabatier: "Jesus was only a man, but a man in whose heart was most completely revealed the fatherly heart of God." [1] And according to Harnack, although in order to be saved one must believe what was said by the Son, it is not indispensable to believe in the divinity of the Son; for he says: "The Father alone and not the Son is an integral part of the gospel preached by Jesus." [2]

But bearing in mind the claims of Christ, as set forth in the many declarations already considered, what was Christ's own notion about His Sonship? To begin with, it was something quite exceptional. The very

[1] Quoted by de Grandmaison, *Jésus Christ.*

[2] *What is Christianity?* Quoted by de Grandmaison, *Jésus Christ.*

prophets of God He calls God's "servants": He styles Himself "the Son,"[1] the "one Son most dear" to the Father,[2] as in the striking parable of the Master of the Vineyard. Again, whilst He teaches His disciples to call God their Father, He separates His own Sonship from theirs: He never says "Our Father," but always "my Father" or "the Father." The address "Our Father" occurs in the words of the Lord's prayer, the prayer taught by the Lord; but it is the prayer for the disciples, not for Himself. In it He bids them beg for the forgiveness of trespasses; but He never asks for any such forgiveness in His own regard, for He is, and declares Himself, free from sin. His Sonship is different in kind from theirs. By reason of it He holds all the secrets of the Father and is Master of all the Father's might: by reason of it He, the well-beloved Son, can succor every human weakness and solace every human woe: by reason of it He alone can know the fulness of the Father's being, even as the Father alone can know all that is the Son's.

[1] Matt. XXI, 33 ff.
[2] Mark XII, 6.

In reverence of spirit let us hearken to the words which Christ spoke, as He "rejoiced in the Holy Ghost"; [1] for, as has been well said,[2] "he who penetrates them has found the way even to the heart of Christianity": "At that time Jesus answered and said: I confess to thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them to little ones. Yea, Father, for so it hath seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered to me by my Father. And no one knoweth the Son but the Father: neither doth any one know the Father but the Son and he to whom it shall please the Son to reveal him. Come to me all you that labor and are burdened and I will refresh you. Take up my yoke upon you, and learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart: and you shall find rest for your souls. For my yoke is sweet and my burden light." [3]

And as the shadows were beginning to lengthen and the horrible excess of pain was

[1] Luke X, 21.
[2] By W. Sanday.
[3] Matt. XI, 25–30.

drawing near, the Christ asked of His own Apostles their inmost thought about Himself. For well nigh three years they had been trained under the blessed influence of His words and example: they had had the cry "Indeed thou art the Son of God" [1] torn from their wondering souls, as they saw Him walk upon the heaving bosom of the sea. And now they must be made ready for the fuller revelation of the suffering Messiah; they must be girded for the battle, whose track would lead to the darkness of Calvary and the shame of the cross.

So, at Cæsarea Philippi Jesus "asked his disciples saying: Who do men say that the Son of man is? But they said: Some John the Baptist, and other some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets. Jesus saith to them: But who do you say that I am? Simon Peter answered and said: Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God." [2] And Christ ratified the declaration and made it His own: He called it the result of a direct manifestation from the Father, in confirmation of His own revela-

[1] Matt. XIV, 33.
[2] Matt. XVI, 13 ff.

tion: He requited it by the promise of the primacy of His Church,—a primacy, which should embrace all the future and the whole universe, and should reach up to the very gates of heaven itself. A stupendous promise as a recompense for a glorious confession! Can any one with unprejudiced mind honestly say, that Christ so extolled the faith of Peter and so overwhelmed him with magnificent promises, simply because Peter had said that Christ was a just man pleasing to God, the Son of God only in the wide and metaphorical meaning of the term? In the circumstances this falls only a little short of absurdity.

After these words of Christ to Peter the untold sorrows, which the future held, were predicted. At last came the accomplishment of woe, as the floodgates of malice and hatred were thrown open to overwhelm the Master. Christ was captured and dragged away as a malefactor. And now He stood before the Sanhedrim, the highest religious authority of the land.

He was questioned officially by those who

had the right to question; and He answered officially as to His work and His person. After the suborned witnesses had failed to bring anything against the prisoner, the high-priest said to Jesus: "I adjure thee by the living God,"—it was the holiest of the names by which the Jews designated the almighty Jahve,—"I adjure thee by the living God that thou tell us if thou be the Christ the Son of God."[1] Christ must answer this question without gloss or equivocation; and He had no mind for either. He rejoiced that now was the hour for the solemn and official proclamation to the Jewish nation of all that He was. Yes, He rejoiced; but as He glanced at the faces of His judges, when the words of the high-priest rang forth and died away in the tense silence, He saw death leering at Him from behind the faces of the proud hypocrites. He knew that His answer would be a *"responsio mortifera,"* "a death-bearing answer," and that His words would sound His funeral knell. "Art thou the Christ the Son of

[1] Matt. XXVI, 63.

God?" "Jesus saith to him: Thou hast said it,"[1] "I am."[2] And Christ was condemned to death for blasphemy. "Behold now you have heard the blasphemy: what think you? . . . He is guilty of death."[3] Once more on the following morning the members of the council asked the same question, received the same answer, confirmed the same sentence.[4]

Here is unquestionably the most explicit and solemn claim to divinity. To say that by His Sonship to God Christ claimed no more than any pious Israelite might claim, is absurd in the circumstances; for that would not have been blasphemy, nor could it have been twisted into such an enormity. But to place Himself in the same rank as "the living God," "the blessed God," this was the supreme crime in the eyes of the Sanhedrim, as they later declared before Pilate, when they were forced to the real charge on which they had condemned the Christ: "We have a law, and according to

[1] Matt. XXVI, 64.
[2] Mark XIV, 62.
[3] Matt. XXVI, 65, 66.
[4] Luke XXII, 66 ff.

the law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God."[1]

Now, I ask you in the light of all this, in view not of one or two statements made by Christ, but of the whole tenor of what He said and did, if there can be any reasonable doubt that He claimed to be divine. As I said in the beginning, and mark it well, we are not now inquiring whether this claim of Christ's is well founded, whether it is based upon the solid foundation of reality or is only an unproved assumption. This we shall consider in the lectures to follow. Just now we are merely asking whether the claim to divinity was seriously made by Christ. And to this there can be but one answer, unless one shuts his eyes to the combined force of texts, whose reliability we have already proved.

Look at the matter in the light of plain common sense. If I, for instance, as I stand before you, were to claim a relationship with God quite distinct from your own, and quite different from that of the holiest of the prophets and the saints; if I were to

[1] John XIX, 7.

claim to forgive sins in my own name; if I were to alter the dispensations of the Christian or divine law; if I were to claim that on the day of general judgment I would render to every one of the countless millions of men and women of this world of ours the reward or punishment deserved by their works, and especially as those works had reference to me myself; if I were to say that I was the Son of God and that God was my Father in a sense quite different from that in which He is yours; if I were to hold to these pretensions consistently through life, and go down to a terrible death with the words still warm upon my lips,—you might call me a madman or a fanatic or an impostor; but you could not for one single moment hesitate to admit that I claimed for myself the dignity of the divine. And so, in the name of the same common sense I call upon all sincere minds and unprejudiced spirits and humble hearts to admit that Jesus of Nazareth did really and seriously claim that He was in truth very God.

In all the references to the gospels made thus far I have, of set purpose, restricted

myself chiefly to the gospel according to St. Matthew, and always to the first three gospels, which are called the Synoptic Gospels on account of the close relationship and resemblance which they bear to one another and which allow them to be so harmonized, section by section, that the parts common to them can be seen at a glance of the eye. And my reason for so doing was, that the rationalistic and liberal critics, who are in opposition to us, say that in these Synoptics there is no allusion at all to a claim to divinity on Christ's part. We have seen how shallow is their pretension.

To refer in this connection to the gospel according to St. John is absolutely legitimate and correct in the line of argumentation, since this gospel is sober history as well as the other three. So clear are Christ's claims to divinity, as set forth in this record, that, since the critics cannot deny them, they have recourse to the expedient of misrepresenting the character of this gospel. They call it symbolism or philosophical musing,—anything except what it is, namely, real and sound history. We

need not again enter upon the consideration of this matter, which was sufficiently touched upon in the preceding lecture, when we proved the reliability of the *four* gospels.

To refer to distinct passages of this gospel is almost superfluous, since the words of St. John make it plain that the main object of the entire work is to show forth Christ's claim to divinity and to prove the validity of this claim. For he says: "Many other signs also did Jesus in the sight of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God: and that believing, you may have life in his name." [1] Still, a few references to Christ's clear claim, as found in the pages of St. John, must not be passed by, besides the big claim that Christ not only has light and truth and life, but is the Light [2] and the Truth [3] and the Life,[4] which means that He is divine.

On the Sabbath day Christ had healed the

[1] John XX, 30, 31.
[2] John I, 4 ff. and *passim*.
[3] John XIV, 6.
[4] *Id., ib.*

sick man at the probatic pool. "Therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, because he did these things on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them: My Father worketh until now, and I work." It was as if He had said: "My Father is not bound by the law of the Sabbath: and neither am I, His Son, bound by this law." "Hereupon therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him: because he did not only break the sabbath, but also said God was his Father, making himself equal to God."[1] And far from retracting His claim, Christ argued His own right in the matter because of the dignity which was His, and He showed forth the proofs of the truth of His claim.

He claimed for Himself preexistence to this mortal life, yes, preexistence in the unity of the divine nature. "Amen, amen I say to you, if any man keep my word, he shall not see death forever. The Jews therefore said: Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead and the prophets are dead: and thou sayest: If any man keep my word, he shall not taste death for-

[1] John VI, 16 ff.

ever. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? . . . Whom dost thou make thyself? Jesus said: . . . Abraham your father rejoiced that he might see my day: he saw it and was glad. The Jews therefore said to him: Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus saith to them: Amen, amen I say to you, before Abraham was, I am." It was like the voice of the Eternal of days saying: "I am who am": it was to claim for Himself the age of the Deity. And they saw His meaning. "They took up stones therefore to cast at him."[1]

And again: "I am the good shepherd: and I know mine and mine know me. As the Father knoweth me and I know the Father: and I lay down my life for my sheep. . . . My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me: and I give them life everlasting: and they shall not perish forever, and no man shall pluck them out of my hand. That which my Father hath given me is greater than all: and no man shall snatch them out of the hand of

[1] John VIII, 51–59.

my Father. *I and the Father are one.* The Jews then took up stones to stone Him."[1]

He and His Father are one! There is Christ's claim. They are one not merely in the union of knowledge; one not only in the union of love; but one with a oneness that is beyond this. No one shall snatch Christ's sheep from His hand, because He is one with the Father in the might which is omnipotence, one in the very nature of the Godhead. True it is, He said on another occasion, "The Father is greater than I";[2] but He was then referring to the majesty of the eternal Father as compared with the humility of His own true human nature. He claimed to be consubstantial with us in our humanity; but He claimed to be consubstantial with the Father in His divinity. "I and the Father are one."

And here we may stop. We might still go on with other testimonies gathered from the gospel pages. We might hearken to the words of love, tenderer than a mother's, in which Christ spoke to His dear ones at the

[1] John X, 14, 15, 27–30.
[2] John XIV, 28.

Last Supper, on the very threshold of the Passion which He had foretold to them. We might give ear to His exhortations to courage, thrilling as a bugle call. We might listen in awed silence to His words of confident appeal to His Father, as He said: "Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son. . . . I have glorified thee upon the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now glorify thou me, O Father, with thyself with the glory which I had before the world was, with thee."[1] But we may close with the words of His claim to oneness with the Father in the divine nature ringing in our ears.

The proofs for the validity of this claim of Christ are still ahead of us; and the first of these proofs is "The Stern Dilemma," which one must face who denies the truth of Christ's claim and is laughed to scorn by the mouth of history. But, standing out as clear as the sun in the noonday heavens, striking as the massive mountains which seem to pierce the clouds, and, to one who

[1] John XVII, 1 ff.

admits the gospel record, unmistakable as the reality of one's own existence is the fact that Jesus Christ did claim to be divine, the Son of God, very God Himself.

LECTURE IV

THE STERN DILEMMA

Christ's claim worthy of acceptance because of the character of Him who gave testimony. Denial of claim faces dilemma,—Christ either impostor or madman. Christ not deceiver. His attitude towards God: reverence: confidence. Relation to men. Love for them: words: deeds. Christ not deceived. Absurdity of adversaries' position. Christ's poise and strength: calm of soul. His doctrine. Its effects. On the threshold of faith. Chalcedon. Summary and explanation.

At this point of our inquiry it will be of advantage, for the sake of clearness, to review briefly the line of argument which we have followed up to the present, and the conclusions at which we have already arrived. As we know quite well, our purpose in considering the ground-work of our Christian faith, especially in its fundamental point of the divinity of Jesus Christ, was and is to deepen and broaden our own realization of the sublimity of God's gift to

us, and at the same time, by being able to give a reason for the faith that is in us, to defend that faith against the attacks of indifferent or scoffing unbelievers, and even to help these unbelievers onward to the hallowed goal of truth.

First, then, we looked at the Catholic Church standing as an undeniable fact in the world to-day and in all the ages since her birth, proved by her marvelous holiness, her unbroken unity, and her wonderful preservation and expansion to be the legate and ambassador of God, the accredited messenger from the Most High to men. From the mouth of this heavenly envoy we learn the truth about her Founder. For, with the guarantee of God Himself upon the truth of her words she tells us that Jesus Christ is really and truly the Son of God; and in humble reverence we take that word to our heart of hearts and cherish it forever.

Then changing the method of inquiry, we began the historical investigation into the life and message of Jesus Christ. In this connection we first considered the worth of the gospel records. And we saw that these

gospels have come down to us without substantial change from the originals written during the generations close to the events described by their authors, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; that the knowledge and truthfulness of these witnesses are a solid guarantee of the facts set down; in a word, that the gospels are real, sober, serious history, and that we can accept without question what they put before us.

Then,—and this was of an importance beyond the possibility of exaggeration,—we examined these gospels as to what precisely Christ claimed that He was: and we found, that, to the eyes of one who is free from blinding prejudice, His claim to be veritably God stands forth in unmistakable clearness. We did not then examine whether this claim of His was true or not. That is the point, which shall occupy us from now on to the end of our work.

In our present reflections, let us consider this claim, viewed as the testimony of Christ Himself. Even thus considered this claim is worthy of our acceptance. For, if the gospel record gives a true account of what

Christ did and said,—and it does; and if Christ claimed to be very God,—and he did; then one who denies the truth of that claim is faced with the dilemma, the stern dilemma, that Christ was either an impostor or a madman.

I tremble as I utter the words. But that is all that is left for one who denies that Christ's claim to divinity is valid. And why? Because, if He was no more than man, yet claimed to be God, either He knew that He was not divine, even whilst He tried to foist His blasphemous claim upon a credulous generation,—and then He was an impostor: or He thought that He was really God, whereas He was merely a mortal,—and then He was a deluded madman. Deny the truth of Christ's claim to divinity, and one of these alternatives must be chosen. And history itself laughs to scorn the fool who would hold either of them.

Christ was not an impostor. To have put forth a claim to divinity, knowing Himself to be but mortal man, would have been, on the one hand, to be false to God even unto the heinousness of horrible blasphemy, and

on the other, to be cruel to men even unto devilish malice. And truly none but the most hardened and brazen of haters of Christ would dare to utter a single word against the appreciation, which the world of believers and unbelievers has accorded to His overwhelming worth.

In olden days the Jews vented their spleen against the pure figure of Jesus of Nazareth in the foul outpourings which found their way into the *Talmud* and were gathered together in the unclean pages of *The Generations of Jesus,* a book that has been rightly called "an explosion of base fanaticism, of hateful sarcasm, and of degraded fancy." The shameful distinction of having recourse to such offscourings of filth and malice, which are a blot on the *Talmud* and the scorn even of instructed Jews, has been reserved for the impudent ignorance of one of the leaders of theosophy, and a woman (heaven save the mark!), Mrs. Annie Besant. The less said about such ravings of hatred, the better.

By unbelievers themselves Christ is recognized as the paragon of mankind, the hero

of heroes, incomparable in His grandeur of soul and His moral uprightness. The infidel Rousseau says: "How blind must anyone be who ventures to compare the son of Sophroniscus (Socrates) to the Son of Mary!" [1]

But let us look at some features of Christ's life, as set forth in the gospels, not merely to see how history gives the lie to the man who would accuse Christ of conscious imposture, but also to come to a fuller realization of the perfection of that sacred life of Christ's, both with regard to His relations to God and with regard to his relations to men.

Towards God Christ was the Son, one and well beloved; and He lived His life in accordance with all that was implied in this relationship. Reverence for God was paramount in His life. "The Lord thy God shalt thou adore and him only shalt thou serve," [2] was His stern rebuke to the sacrilegious tempter. "Render therefore to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to

[1] Rousseau, *Emile.*
[2] Matt. IV, 10.

God the things that are God's,"[1] was His motto for the conduct of life. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind: this is the greatest and the first commandment,"[2] was His unrestricted confirmation of the words which were the glory of the Law.

This profound reverence for God was manifested through all the days of His life. He showed it by the supreme respect of His prayer, which was long and frequent. To days, filled full with the ministry of mercy, He joined nights of unbroken converse with God in prayer:[3] on the evening of the Last Supper, from the repast with His dear Apostles and after His gift of love He went forth to the garden of Gethsemani for the struggle unto the agony of blood through the hours of courageous pleading with the Father: on the cross He closed His life with the sweet prayer of confidence, as He said: "Father, into thy hands I commend my

[1] Matt. XXII, 21.
[2] Matt. XXII, 37.
[3] Cf. Luke VI, 12; XXI, 37.

spirit."[1] Ever and always there was the most intimate union with His Father,—a union of unspeakable reverence and of immeasurable confidence.

Yet, it must be remarked, this confidence was absolutely unafraid; this union was profound, but tender and unabashed. Here we have something which is not found in the highest and greatest saints of God. Search through the lives of the holiest ones of earth: it will be seen that the first step to union with the Eternal is the crushing realization of personal unworthiness,—a realization which grows to overwhelming proportions in view of the wretchedness of a nature culpable, ungrateful, fallen. This consciousness of unworthiness urges the saints on to complete and utter immolation in the fierce hunger and thirst for personal purification: this too is the explanation of their passion for suffering, which is a scandal to the world that does not understand.

But in Christ we see none of this: it is not there. And this is due not to any lack of appreciation of what God is and of what

[1] Luke XXIII, 46.

belongs to Him; not to forgetfulness of the horror of sin; not to a belittling of the claims of divine justice: it is due to His consciousness of that purity of soul and that sublimity of being, which are at home on the heights of the divine.

Christ exhorted others to penance for their transgressions: He had no need for repentance, since He had not been stained by sin. Nay, he challenged his bitterest foes, who were watching for every chance to find something to blame in Him, to point out aught of evil in His life: "Which of you shall convince me of sin?"[1] Even when treating of the heights and depths of salvation and of the mysteries of God, He was on familiar ground and knew whereof he spoke. The clever Pascal once said: "A poor artisan who speaks of riches, an attorney who speaks of war or royalty," soon betrays his ignorance; but "the rich speak well of riches, a king speaks unconcernedly of a royal gift just made,—and God speaks well of God."[2]

[1] John VIII, 46.
[2] Pascal, *Pensées*, p. 237.

Although it is not yet admitted that all this grandeur of Christ's surpasses the possibility of the merely human, still it must be clear that one, such as this man, would not speak lightly or falsely or blasphemously of God and the things of God; that he would not knowingly utter claims which would be a horrible insult to the Deity. Yet, Christ would have done just this, had He asserted divinity for Himself, knowing that it was all a lie. Therefore, in view of Christ's attitude towards God the supposition of conscious imposture is shown to be altogether untenable.

And Christ's dealings with men show Him equally removed from the diabolical cruelty, which would consciously foist upon them a delusion that would spell disaster for them. The summary of His life, as told by St. Peter, was: "He went about doing good."[1] Whilst from all men He demanded absolute loyalty and unrestricted devotion to Himself, He was considerate to the utmost. He who avenged the honor of the house of God, who scourged with tongue of fire the hypoc-

[1] Acts X, 38.

risy of the Pharisees, who healed the sick and commanded nature, and who did all this as the most natural thing in the world,—this same one was in the midst of His loved ones almost in the position of a menial. "I am in the midst of you as he that serveth." [1] No one of honest, upright soul ever found Him hard of approach; for He loved men. And His tender heart was touched by the sight of the people wandering like sheep without a shepherd. "I have compassion upon the multitude." [2]

Not even those who were unworthy of His loving-kindness were cut off from His all-embracing care; for He rebuked the disciples who wished to call down fire from heaven upon those who scorned the Christ, and He said: "You know not of what spirit you are." [3] Then too, the love for innocent childhood, which is so marked in the soul of every truly great lover of men, shone forth strikingly in Him; for after wearying labors had worn Him out, and in

[1] Luke XXII, 27.
[2] Mark VIII, 2.
[3] Luke IX, 55.

the midst of important occupations He had a heart for these little innocents. "And they brought to him young children, that he might touch them. And the disciples rebuked those that brought them. Whom when Jesus saw he was much displeased and said to them: Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of heaven. . . . And embracing them and laying his hands upon them he blessed them." [1]

Such was His all-encompassing love for men, that His heart went out to those wandering children of the Father, the most abandoned sinners, and this to such a degree as to draw upon Himself the carping criticism of the self-righteous Pharisees. "This man," they said, "receiveth sinners and eateth with them." [2] And in reply to their charge He, who before had said, "I came not to call the just, but sinners to penance," [3] far from falling back before their criticism, gloried in the title of "friend of sinners," and to justify Himself spoke

[1] Mark X, 13 ff.
[2] Luke XV, 2.
[3] Luke V, 32.

the sweetest stories ever told about His own merciful love,—the story of the Prodigal Son and of the Shepherd who left his flock and went after the one sheep that had wandered away.[1]

Blessed words of the blessed Christ! Yet His words did not tell the whole story: His example but strengthened the impression of His words. The Master, who was so terrible and uncompromising towards sin, held out hands of loving mercy to the Samaritan woman, to the sinner of Magdala, to Zacchaeus, to the executioners on Calvary, to the thief dying on the cross. The tears, which He shed before the tomb of the dead Lazarus, caused the assembled crowd to say, "Behold how he loved him."[2] His unfailing tenderness towards the weak and the sorrowful and the oppressed, His burning longing for outcast sinners speak of His love for all who bore the nature and name of man.

Not only are these endearing traits of Christ fuel for the piety of us who believe;

[1] Cf. Luke XV.
[2] John XI, 36.

but they should serve to all the world as manifestations of the transcendent worth of Him whose soul we are reverently studying. And from this study of Christ according to the gospel record we see His love supreme for all mankind. At times severity was called for, when there was question of tearing away the mask of smug hypocrisy that was perverting the true notion of the Kingdom of God of which He was King, and was blinding to the bright light of heaven the souls of the wanderers so dear to Him. But it was the severity of love; and, as Holy Scripture says, "love is strong as death, jealousy as hard as hell"; [1] it can wound, but only to let out the poison. And the same Christ, who drove forth from the Temple the traffickers who had defiled the house of God, wept over Jerusalem, prayed for His persecuters, and pleaded for His very executioners.

Now, in the face of this undying love for His fellowmen can any one seriously maintain, that such a one as Christ consistently proved Himself to be could have deliber-

[1] Cant. VIII, 6.

ately fostered and propagated a deception, which would lead men away from the truth in the most momentous matters of time and eternity? To a sincere and honest inquirer the question is answered in the asking. No; no impostor, Christ, but the paragon of mankind. As a sympathetic student of Christ the Man has put it: "When the blending of profound goodness and sovereign authority stands up under the most terrible trials; when it does not belie itself either before injustice or calumny or the falling away of friends or the perfidy of foes; when a man can be condescending without abasement, when he can devote himself to others without losing his own ascendancy, when he can give without abandoning himself,—he must be proclaimed the perfection of manhood."[1]

Jesus Christ was all this. Such a one, so perfect in all His relations to God and man, cannot be said to have blasphemed God and hated His fellowmen, as He would have done, had He been a conscious deceiver, a calculating impostor. None, indeed, but the most hardened spirits, lost even to a

[1] Léonce de Grandmaison, *Jésus Christ.*

sense of honest shame, have dared to cast such a calumny upon the fair name of the Master. So, the first alternative of "the stern dilemma" is done for.

Has the other alternative any firmer grounds of support? Can one say that Christ was deceived with regard to Himself and His mission? Was He a dupe? If one denies Christ's divinity and yet refuses to stain himself with the blasphemy that Christ was an impostor, there is nothing left except to maintain that He was a madman, a fanatical enthusiast, a victim of a supreme delusion.

If this alternative is thus bluntly and baldly presented, there is hardly any one who does not draw back in horror from embracing such a position. Some few have had the contemptible distinction of holding such a view and of pointing to the more-than-half-madness of certain geniuses. But, though some geniuses, like Comte and Nietzsche, have dwelt within the shadowy land of mania, still their genius was manifested in the hours of sanity and in proportion to their sound mentality. Even the in-

fidel Renan scoffs at the foolishness of speaking of Christ as a madman; for he says: "The madman does not succeed. Never yet has a mind out of joint seriously affected the onward march of humanity."[1] Christ on the contrary (and this is still the thought of Renan) was the common honor of every one that has a human heart. He was placed "at the highest summit of human grandeur . . . superior to his disciples in every way . . . the inexhaustible source of moral knowledge . . . the loftiest of the columns which show man whence he comes and whither he should tend. In him is condensed all that is good and elevated in our nature."[2] Beautiful words, it is true, and acceptable even from the lips of the infidel! How well they are deserved by Him who is the object of them! Yet, notwithstanding these glorious words, the same rationalist, fixed in his immovable prejudices, does reduce Christ to the depths from which he professes to exclude Him. With his miserable impertinences about the enthus-

[1] *Vie de Jésus*, p. 80.
[2] *Ib.*, p. 465.

ing urgings of the prophecies upon Christ's spirit Renan mingles captious observations as to the irresistible force of circumstances, the strange psychology of the Oriental mind, and the higher standards of judgment with regard to souls superlatively great; but amid the avalanche of words the statement stands forth, as bald and crude as a rock in a desert, that Christ was no more than a gentle fanatic. And this arrogant declaration of Renan's is answered by his own words, to which I have just referred.

Rationalists are not the only ones who are forced to embrace the hateful and almost ludicrous alternative, which holds that Christ was deluded: the same is true of all, who, whilst denying conscious imposition on Christ's part, refuse to admit the truth of His claim to divinity. Thus, Sabatier, after all his explanations and diminutions and apostrophes of admiration for the fairest soul that ever existed, is forced back to the rationalist position; for, as we saw before, he holds that "Jesus was only a man, but a man in whose heart the fatherly heart of God was revealed with the most perfect com-

pleteness." Then, of a truth, though the greatest of all the prophets and the very "seal of the prophets," Christ was a dupe, deceived most monstrously. Harnack too makes of Christ a person apart from the rest of men, a personality quite unique, neither truly God nor simply man,—the mediator between God and man, the consoler and judge of all humanity. Yet, once again, if Christ was not God, then, since He claimed that He was and was not an impostor, He was deceived and deluded. Others whom we need not name, who call themselves Christians and who stand in Christian pulpits, have so diluted the element of the divine which they admit in Christ, that they also are practically thrust into the camp of the rationalists.

If I refer, even in passing, to these erring minds, it is in the spirit of candid and profound pity for them, and with the prayer that they may come to realize better the lengths to which prejudice or passion or a proud clinging to personal opinion may lead the weakness of the mind of man. They have looked upon the Christ and they have

not recognized Him: "there hath stood one in the midst of them whom they knew not."[1] God keep the sincere of heart from such blindness! Let us humbly look at the Christ of the gospels to learn Him for what He was in this regard too, and to see that the supposition that He was deceived, illusioned, deluded, is as much opposed to calm and solid fact as is the other alternative about conscious imposture on His part.

In the Master we see one who is on fire with His message; but for all that He always dominates His mission and is greater than the work which He came to do. In His character there is not only massive strength, but a perfect balance and equilibrium of all His powers. Simplicity and complete mastery over Himself are qualities that stand out in striking evidence in His life: there is no wild exaggeration, no littleness of vanity, no trace of egotistical or self-interested bitterness. He may speak of the most sublime and majestic mysteries; He is not carried out of Himself. He may scourge the destructive hypocrisy of His opponents and

[1] Cf. John I, 26.

grow indignant over their culpable hardness of soul; He is always in full command of every word and deed. In the midst of attacks, envenomed with the shafts of black hatred, He lets fall no word which might point to a loss of grasp of Himself. And all this we do not find in men even of heroic mold. The wild excitement of a mind tottering to its ruin; the gloomy reticence which speaks of a soul falling before the onrush of uncontrollable events; the babbling incoherence of an intellect unsettled before the magnificence of a great ideal,—these are as far removed from Jesus of Nazareth as is death from life.

Even the excess of pain cannot break the unalterable calm of soul which is His. He may writhe in the unspeakable agony of Gethsemani; but the strength of love conquers the shrinking of human nature, and He goes forth to meet His doom, calm as an angel, strong as a giant, tender as a mother, nay, perfect as a God. When almost cut to pieces by the horrible scourge; when crowned with the piercing thorns; when cast off by His people, whose angry shouts demand the

cross for Him, He can stand before the representative of mighty Rome with the unruffled majesty which makes the pagan governor fear that in condemning Him he may be condemning one who is more than man, "the Son of God." That was the state of Christ's mind and soul, as we see it portrayed in the veracious gospel record.

And His doctrine! Oh, the wonder of it all! Any one who can say that a deluded man, though the gentlest of maniacs, could, whilst leading a life of such surpassing sanctity, preach a doctrine so holy, so suited to all conditions of mankind, so productive of religious and moral regeneration, has indeed fallen victim to a most monstrous delusion and is himself unbalanced.

In His teaching Christ reaffirmed the truth of the Old Law touching the nature of the Godhead, its unity and spirituality and supreme sanctity. He restored the original unity and indissolubility of the marriage bond. He brought before the eyes of men the immortality and value of a human soul, as had never been done before. Further than this, He took the central precept of the

Old Testament about the love of God, and showed how from the fatherhood of God there flows forth the brotherhood of man,—a truth, which the Jews had never understood, and still less had any other nation. He did away with the carnal notion, according to which men were to be urged to virtue and deterred from vice by the promise of material rewards and the threat of temporal disasters; and He placed before them the true ideal of the Kingdom of God with its spiritual economy. In fine, He taught most clearly what He Himself was, and this was the central point of the whole Christian revelation.

And He placed before the world a moral code beyond which man can never go. In His Sermon on the Mount He preached the heights of moral excellence; for He set as the standard of man's striving the infinite perfection of God's own holiness: "Be ye therefore perfect as also your heavenly Father is perfect." [1]

Duty was the supreme motive of the Old Dispensation: love was to be the master-

[1] Matt. V, 48.

principle of the New Covenant. Formerly God's fixed command was the norm of action; henceforth God's good-pleasure was to be strong enough to urge His loyal ones to the greatness of splendid works of supererogation. From no other moral code, no matter how holy, could the Beatitudes have been evolved; for meekness and humility were not honored of men as they were of God. Christ placed them at the very foundation of the edifice of holy living: He taught them by word and example, just as He taught the lesson of voluntary self-sacrifice. He proclaimed the sacredness of voluntary poverty, perpetual celibate chastity, and complete obedience; for before Him these virtues were neither preached nor practised. With Him self-conquest, as a preliminary for conquering the world to God, the folly of the cross, was the heart of the divine paradox, "He that will save his life, shall lose it: and he that shall lose his life for my sake, shall find it." [1]

Moreover this doctrine of Christ's was suited not only to the great and learned and

[1] Matt. XVI, 25.

mighty souls of earth, but to the feeble and unlettered and little ones as well. And the excellence of the doctrine, together with the life-giving power which was within it and around it, is manifested by the marvelous effects which it has produced in the world. In the days long gone by idolatry was the heritage of most of mankind. Where is it now? Fled before the light shed upon the world by Jesus of Nazareth. And though it is but too sadly true that there is still the vileness of sin, that makes a charnel-house of God's fair world for those who in theory or in practice reject the morality of Jesus Christ,—yet, what was the abyss of moral filth, in which the races of men were wallowing before Christ's coming? The whole wide world was like a riotous, seething brothel of mad impurity, until in the midst of the defiled darkness there shone forth the sweet brilliancy of Christian purity.

The family was saved from destruction by Christ's solemn reassertion of the indissolubility of wedlock: woman was raised up from the degradation of a chattel, a plaything, a toy of lust, to the sacredness which

is hers as being of the same sex as the Mother of the Christ. The child that was "for the city a hope, for some a toy, for many a prey" was lifted up and consecrated as the model of what all must become who would have part with Christ.

The State, which was built upon fear and slavery, was transformed, until upon the ruins of a rotten empire was reared a new civilization, which recognized the sacredness of a human soul and the dignity of a man. Nations as well as individuals, oh! so frequently, have proved unfaithful to the doctrines which were at the root of their new greatness; they have forgotten that might does not make right; they have often overridden the just claims of the weak and defenseless: but they have done it against the higher ideals and nobler principles of a better regime, and instead of being cravenly lauded by a servile world as of old, they have stood condemned by the voice of humanity.

And thus we see Christ's doctrine as the teacher of life, the foe of vice, the fruitful mother of virtue, not only for individuals, but for the family and for civil society the

world over, holding forth the promises of real worth now and forevermore. A doctrine, so sublime in itself and so prolific of good results, cannot be the fruit of an evil tree: it cannot be the outcome of the dreams of a madman's mind twisted from its centre.

And the words and deeds of Christ, back of His sacred doctrine, prove again that His was a mind so calm and transparent and self-possessed in the face of almost overwhelming disturbances, that to declare Him to have been deceived is to falsify history. Would that those, who proffer their washed-out expositions of the facts of the gospel, would realize where they truly stand! They may declare that Christ was invested with the highest grace and with a charm all His own, that He was possessed of a gift of inspiration quite unique in degree, although of the same kind as that of the prophets; but they leave Him nothing more than man. Then they are faced with the stern dilemma which we have been considering,—Christ was either a deceiver and an impostor, or He was deceived and a pitiable dupe. And

the record of what Christ was, as shown forth in the gospels, gives the lie to both of these alternatives.

Therefore one is led up to the very door of faith. He is not forced within; for faith is free, that it may be meritorious. Yet, as a reasonable, prudent man, there is nothing left for him to do, but to plead with God for the divine gift to crown his good will, and then to bow down as he enters through the gate which leads to the truth of God. If he does not go forward in the light of God, he is condemned to wander aimlessly in the darkness; for by the facts of history he is brought to a blind-way, from which there is no egress except through the faith which adores Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

Difficulties? Of course, there are difficulties, though there can be no doubts; difficulties before which our puny minds must bow down in the consciousness of their colossal weakness; difficulties in which we must seek the help of the infallible guardian of truth, the Church, after she has been proved to hold the position of the keeper of the Master's word.

And here we may refer to the traditional belief of the Church, as set forth in the Council of Chalcedon, 451 A. D., not as a proof, but as the clearest exposition of the facts of the gospel history. Professor J. Bethune Baker says: "Whoever accepts as history in the ordinary sense of the word the record of the gospels concerning Christ and His claims" (and we have seen that one must so accept this record), "need occupy himself no further with the task of refashioning the original doctrine concerning Christ."[1] Now, the Council teaches that Jesus Christ is "perfect in Godhead and perfect in manhood, true God and true man, consubstantial with the Father according to the divinity, consubstantial with us in His humanity, . . . in two natures . . . and one person, . . . one and the same Son and the only-begotten of the Father . . . our Lord Jesus Christ."[2]

In Christ there is unquestionably the divine. It is only thus that we can explain His claims, His word that only the infinite knowledge of the Father can compass the

[1] In *Journal of Theological Studies*, Oct., 1913.
[2] Denz. 148

being of the Son, and His demands upon mankind in all the details of their lives even unto the judgment seat. Yes; God He is, real God, true God. Yet just as unquestionably is He man,—man of His time, of His race, of His country. He had a mother; He had friends; He had enemies. He was loved and cherished even to adoration; He was hated even to the extremity of mad folly. He was wearied and hungry and thirsty. He labored and preached and healed and comforted with a human love. He was not an angel in human form, not a phantom, but a man with a body and a soul, with flesh and blood, yes, "flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone."

Yet for all this He is *one:* He is one person, who thinks and speaks and prays and suffers and lives and dies. Christ is one Ego, acting as a man and possessing the principle of human activity, which is the nature of man; acting as God, and as such possessing the principle of divine activity, the nature of God. "One person," says the non-Catholic Illingworth, "who despite His evident humanity impresses us from begin-

ning to end as quite at home in two worlds."[1] The thought is quite correct. And a learned Catholic thus expresses his mind: "A person surpassingly wise and supremely good, adorable and accessible, Christ is all ours in one entire part of His life, 'consubstantial' with our humanity; and on the other hand He is all divine, the worthy object of our unconditioned homage of adoration,—He is God. Try to express the same truth in abstract terms and briefly, and you fall back into the lines of the definition of the Council."[2] And finally the Protestant Seeburg remarks upon the words of the Council: "As at Nice it was recognized once and for all that there is but one God, . . . God, and not a demigod, so that Christ as God is one with the Father; so at Chalcedon the doctrine was fixed, that, when one speaks of Christ as man, he must understand a man consubstantial with our humanity, not a man half deified. As at Nice the mythological notion of a demigod was exterminated from the concept of God, so at Chalcedon was the

[1] *Divine Immanence*, p. 50.
[2] de Grandmaison, *Jésus Christ*.

same (mythological notion of a demigod) excluded from the idea of Christ made man."[1]

The words of the Council accord best with the facts of the gospels; and that is sufficient for our present purpose. Therefore, to conclude, the claim of Jesus Christ to divinity, true and entire, is proved by the consideration of the character of Christ Himself. In our reflections in succeeding lectures we shall study the extrinsic proofs of the same claim, and shall show from these how it merits our faith.

Faith? Once more, yes. To refuse that faith is to throw away the history of the gospels, or it is to deny the fact that Christ claimed to be very God; and how arbitrary and prejudiced either of these courses is we have already seen with sufficient particularity. Christ's claim, then, even apart from the proofs from prophecy and miracle, must be admitted. And why? We may close with the reason gripping our minds and hearts. Why? Because to deny it, is to brand oneself with the folly and the crime

[1] Cited by de Grandmaison, ib.

of calling the holy and loving Christ a blasphemous and cruel impostor, or of styling the wise and surpassing Christ a deluded dupe and madman. There is no escape from "the stern dilemma."

LECTURE V

THE SEAL OF PROPHECY

Christ's appeal to prophecy as proof of His claim to divinity. Necessity of divine testimony. Nature of prophecy. Possibility of divine signs. Dispositions needed for grasping full force of proof. Old Testament prophecies about Christ. Chance fulfillment impossible. If fulfilled, prove one in whom fulfilled veracious legate of God. Fulfilled in Christ. His own predictions about Himself: about others. Their fulfillment ratifies His claim.

In the gospel according to St. John there is a striking passage, which brings before us very forcibly Christ's own method of winning acceptance for His claims. By the pool of Bethsaida the Master had healed the sick man and had sent him away carrying his bed, which had been his pallet of pain for long years. It was on the Sabbath day; and the Jews took umbrage at Christ's deed, as belittling the obligation of the Sabbath rest. In reply to their cavilling attack

Christ asserted His equality with the Father. He declared that He Himself gave life; that all judgment was reserved to Him; that He would raise up the dead at the last day; that He would render to each man the reward of eternal bliss for his good deeds or the endless punishment of damnation for his transgressions. And the proof of His claim? "If I bear witness to myself," He says, "my witness is not true," that is, you will not accept it, since you do not recognize all that my life has shown me to be, though the claim is true and the witness valid for all that. But "the works which the Father hath given me to perfect; the works themselves which I do, give testimony of me that the Father hath sent me; and the Father Himself who hath sent me hath given testimony of me. . . . Search the scriptures" (or more correctly, you do search the scriptures) " . . . and the same are they that give testimony of me."[1] Here we see that Christ Himself appealed, among other things, to the fulfillment of prophecy as a proof that He was of God.

[1] John V, 31 ff.

In the last lecture we looked at the life of Jesus of Nazareth,—a man profoundly religious and aflame with love for His fellowmen, a man wise and ever master of Himself: we saw that we must admit that He was very God, as He claimed to be, since to reject that claim is to be forced to embrace one of two horrible alternatives, namely, that Christ was either a vile impostor or a pitiable madman. To hold either of these is to stultify oneself.

Besides this reason, however, we may profitably turn to the other proof to which Christ appealed in the words quoted above, namely, to the direct approbation of God Himself upon His mission with His claim to divine Sonship. When there is question of bowing down in the assent of faith to the teachings of one, who proclaims as the positive revelation of God truths beyond those made known by reason alone, it is indeed necessary, that he who demands this humble loyalty of us be sealed with the stamp of God's approbation. As St. Thomas says, one who speaks in the name of God must show "a divine testimony, manifesting in

his behalf the intervention of the power or truth of God."[1]

Now, Christ did most certainly appeal to such confirmation, and this in a manifold way. His own testimony, based on His life, was already divine; but He went beyond this. When He told His hearers that from the Scriptures they could find the proof of His mission from God, did He not refer to the fulfillment in Himself of the prophecies of God? When He said that the "works," which He did, gave testimony to Him, did He not speak of His own prophecies and miracles? He would not, it is true, give to the Jews the "signs" which they sought,—signs in the sun and the moon and the stars, signs weird in their extravagance and theatrical in their outward splendor: but true signs He did give to them and to all mankind, from which to recognize the validity of His claims.

One proof, then, is found in the perfectly fulfilled prophecies about Him or made by Himself; another, in miracles wrought in attestation of the truth. Both are divine

[1] *De Potentia*, q. VI, art. 5.

signs. In prophecies God intervenes unto approbation by His omniscience; in miracles, by His omnipotence. At present we shall concern ourselves with God's approbation manifested by "The Seal of Prophecy."

In a proper, though a wider sense, a prophecy is any message from God to man. It may also be taken to stand for the power of seeing things not present to the speaker or of reading the secret thoughts of men. These, however, are only the dawn of the full day of prophecy. For, in its strictest meaning, a prophecy is the certain prediction of a future free event, which cannot be foreknown by natural causes. It is a miracle in the intellectual order; for every man has always understood such a divine intervention, manifesting a special approbation of God, to be a real miracle.

Many indeed have openly scoffed at miracles, whether in the intellectual or the physical order. They have called belief in them intellectual suicide. They have denied the possibility of such divine signs, or at least the possibility of verifying the actual

occurrence of such things. They have even distorted the traditional notion of miracles, so as to make everything of the religious order a miracle,—which means to deny miracles altogether.

As St. Thomas observed long ago,[1] most of the errors about the possibility or the actual fact of divine intervention arise from men's misconceptions about the nature and the activity of God. The wisdom of this observation is but too sadly confirmed by a glance at the position of the opponents of truth. They have gone wrong in their ideas about God, about revelation, and the like. Before one can attribute to God a special intervention in the affairs of men, it is, of course, necessary to recognize that God exists and has a provident care for all that He has made. It must be a personal God that we admit,—a God within us, but outside of us and transcending us; or else to speak of a divine intervention can be nothing but a twisting of traditional terms into new and false meanings. This distortion of the meaning of received expressions is exactly

[1] *De Potentia*, q. VI, art. 1.

what the modernists have consistently attempted: and nothing else was to be expected from the poison of their false philosophy. For, if one abandons the existence of a personal God and substitutes an impersonal deity, a sort of soul of the universe, the hidden root of things, whether as an Idea striving to express itself, or as a Force aiming to realize itself, or as a Conscience tending to concentrate itself in the spirit of man, (all modernistic vagaries, flowing from their philosophic tenets),—how in heaven's name can there be any question of a true revelation of God to man, of a communication of knowledge or power divine from the Most High to the creature of His love?

As we understood in the very beginning of our reflections, we are assuming the existence of a personal God, who has a loving care for man; we are assuming that man is immortal and free and with responsibilities towards his Maker. We do not purpose to establish these assumptions here. If one denies these truths, he must begin further back in his inquiries, and must work his way to the knowledge of a sound philosophy.

But to one who admits these fundamental truths, which are as unshaken as the deep-based mountains, there is and can be no difficulty in God's intervening by "divine signs": for him the difficulties of modernistic and rationalistic science (?) melt away like wax before the fire. God is the first cause and the last end of everything outside of Himself; He is bending over His creation with the fulness of provident love: and that He can communicate Himself to His reasonable creatures is as clear as the sun in heaven. God can also guarantee this communication to be really His own by such signs as manifest His own presence: nor is there in such signs, as seal His divine intervention, anything beyond or unworthy of God.

For, what is such a divine sign? In the first place there is the element of the unusual, the extraordinary, and the marvelous, and this in relation to some exterior, visible fact. More important, this marvelous fact is beyond the power of any one less than God. And finally,—and from this comes its

proving force,—it is attached to a person or a doctrine with the sanction of a divine seal.

In the case of a real prophecy, a future event which depends upon the free will of God or man is predicted, not with ambiguity (as in many oracles of old), not as a mere conjecture, but with precision and certainty. There is not the slightest difficulty in showing that this can come from none but God; for none but God can know with certainty such a future free event. If there is question of something in the womb of time, but already engendered by the necessary causes which produce it, the prediction of this is not at all beyond the power of the human mind. Nay, its foretelling loses even the character of the marvelous except for those who are ignorant,—as, for instance, the prediction of an eclipse of the sun or moon. If there is question of a happy guess or conjecture as to political or historical events, this does not transcend finite knowledge. But when there is question of an assured and unequivocal and certain foretelling of a future event which depends upon free

will, no mind but God's can pierce the veil of futurity to foresee and foretell the happening.

Or rather, with God it is not piercing the veil of futurity: it is seeing things in His ever-present eternity, to which there is no past or future, but an everlasting "now." Whatever to our limited being shall be, already *is* for Him. The incomplete, though graphic, comparison of St. Thomas is well-known in this connection. If a man, he says, stands upon a mountain peak, the whole valley lies outstretched before him. Perhaps an army is moving in winding march along the base of the mountain,—a long-drawn train of men and horses and engines of war. In one look the man on the height sees it all; the foremost rank and the rear-guard and all between are included in one all-embracing glance of his eye. But down on the plain there are those who have passed, those who are passing, those who will pass a given point; and the one in the ranks does not see or know what has passed or what will come after him. So God alone from the inattainable height of His eternity can

know the future unerringly: as present He sees it in His changeless eternity of being. And if God to point out His human instrument as His chosen ambassador makes known what is exclusively His own knowledge, this is a case of real prophecy, and is a divine seal on the mission of the prophet. Of course, a prophecy's force as a proof lies in its fulfillment as a confirmation of the doctrine or person of the legate of God.

It is with good reason that the Church tells her children that divine signs, both miracles and prophecies, "are accommodated to the intelligence of all." [1] Yet for all that, they require certain dispositions of heart, in order that they may produce their full effect in the souls of men. They are the voice of God sounding forth His approbation by the manifestation of His infinite knowledge, in the case of prophecies, or of His infinite power, in the case of miracles; but all men do not hear that voice with the same ease or docility. Neither skill in scientific lore nor depth of philosophic attainment is necessary that one may hear.

[1] Denz. 1790.

But love for truth, respect for the divine authority, unfailing confidence in God's beneficent providence,—these have a great influence in making one quick to recognize these divine signs. An eminent theologian has said: "If (proper) moral dispositions are lacking, if the soul cannot bear the truth or is afraid of it, . . . a man breaks the living link, which binds the signs to the authority or the veracity of God; he persuades himself that the signs do not come from God or that they are not given as a testimony of His revelation." [1]

Even one such divine intervention, clearly established in approbation of the mission of someone, is sure with the authority of God Himself. But in our investigation about Christ and His claim we have not only one, but a whole host of prophecies, fulfilled in Him and uttered by Him, and manifestly bound up with the religious movement of which He is the author. And relying on these and under the watchful providence of God, we are sure of our ground, and we may all say with Richard of St. Victor: "O

[1] J. Scheeben, *Dogmatik.*

Lord, if there is an error, we have been deceived by *Thee.*"

In a twofold way Christ is proved by prophecy to be the ambassador of the Eternal of days, and hence to be all that He claimed to be, when He said that He was the Son of God: first, by the prophecies about Him fulfilled in Himself; and secondly, by the prophecies which He Himself made and which were fulfilled. Let us look at both these ways.

First, then, we may say: If God declares by real prophecies that a certain one will come and will be the bearer of His word, the fact that such a man has come will be proof that he is the legate of God and that his word must be received with the reverence which the divine testimony deserves. Now, this is precisely what we find from the consideration of the Old Testament predictions about Christ. This is exactly what Christ Himself appealed to when He said to the Jews: "You search the scriptures: . . . the same are they that give testimony to me." [1] This is the very thing to which the Apostles and

[1] John V, 39.

evangelists turned as an unassailable demonstration of the mission of Christ as the Messiah. This is the argument so familiar to the early apologists of the Christian religion.

It is a fact, that cannot be questioned, that at the time of Christ's advent there was a universal expectation among the Jews (and for that matter even among the pagans), that a messenger from God was about to come. It is furthermore true that this expectation was due to no other cause than the writings which they looked upon as sacred. We need not, and we do not, insist upon the sacred character of these books of the Old Testament: nor is it necessary to discuss the exact time of their composition. This much is quite certain, that at least three centuries before Christ there existed a Greek translation of the original Hebrew writings, and that therefore the Hebrew scriptures existed before that time. Now, these writings contain many explicit and definite predictions about one who would come as the legate of God to men.

We shall not dwell upon each prophecy in detail and show that it is Messianic in char-

acter, since that would take more time than is at our disposal and is not necessary: but we shall look at the whole series of predictions about the Messiah who was to come,—prophecies made by different men at divers times about "Him who was to be sent," prophecies which depended for their fulfillment upon the free will of God Himself and as a consequence could be known only by God. At these we shall glance, and then we shall look at their fulfillment, which marks as the herald of the Most High Him in whom they are accomplished.

In the narrative of the fall and condemnation of the forebears of the race there is already the first gleam of hope for mankind in the promise of one who should crush the power of the devilish conqueror;[1] and this hope was to cheer a weary race through ages of wretched misery. After Abraham's going forth from his father's house; after his fidelity to the Most High in the terrible trial, which would have broken a spirit less strong and noble, the promise already made to him by God is repeated and sanctioned with the

[1] Gen. III, 15.

oath of the Eternal: "By my own self have I sworn, saith the Lord, . . . I will bless thee, . . . and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."[1] On the former occasion, in token of the truth of the words of Jahve, the patriarch's name is changed from Abram, "noble lord," to Abraham, "father of many nations."[2] The promise of God passes on to Isaac[3] and the field of realization is narrowed. Again, to Jacob it is said: "I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: . . . and in thee and thy seed all the tribes of the earth shall be blessed."[4] And when Jacob is about to be gathered to his fathers, he blesses his sons, and it is to Juda that he speaks the words: "Juda, thee shall thy brethren praise. . . . The sceptre shall not be taken away from Juda . . . till he come that is to be sent and he shall be the expected of nations."[5] The kingly power is promised to Juda's descendants, to be perfected

[1] Gen. XXII, 16 ff.
[2] Gen. XVII, 4 ff.
[3] Gen. XXVI, 2–5.
[4] Gen. XXVIII, 13, 14.
[5] Gen. XLIX, 8, 10.

under Him who is "the expectation of nations."

Brighter grows the light, when David, of the race of Juda, sits on Israel's throne and is followed by Solomon. To both of these it is promised that the temporal kingdom shall not fail, if they are faithful to Jahve, but that the regal dignity, though not of earth, shall remain even in face of their treason to the God of Israel, whose Messiah of their line shall reign forevermore. Yes, the one to be sent shall be a King, great and everlasting, but with a spiritual sovereignty, a prince of justice and of peace. In one of the Psalms the Lord God speaks to Him whom He has "appointed King over Sion, His holy mountain" and says: "Ask of me, and I will give thee the Gentiles for thy inheritance and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession."[1] Another Psalm refers to the King as one who "shall continue with the sun and before the moon throughout all generations. . . . In his day shall justice spring up and the abundance of peace, till the moon be taken away. And he

[1] Ps. II, 8.

shall rule from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. . . . And in him shall all the tribes of the earth be blessed: all nations shall magnify him."[1]

Isaias says of Him: "Government is upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, God the mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of peace."[2] And Jeremias prophesies: "Behold the days shall come, saith the Lord, and I will raise up to David a just branch: and a king shall reign, and shall be wise: and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth: . . . and this is the name they shall call him: The Lord our just one."[3] Yes, Jahve will reign in His Messiah, who shall be glorious with unbounded sovereignty, spiritual in its nature and by reason of its universality, but who for all that shall suffer as the Servant of Jahve and triumph through ignominy; for thus Isaias[4] describes the one who is to be sent, though the prophet speaks his message

[1] Ps. LXXI, 5, 7, 8, 17.
[2] Isaias IX, 6.
[3] Jerem. XXIII, 5, 6.
[4] C. LIII.

to ears that are deaf and tight closed by hardness of heart.

And so the story goes on: thus the outlines on the canvas are filled in, detail after detail, and the light from heaven is focused to a point more and more distinct. In the days of the captivity of God's chosen people Daniel is comforted by heaven's promise, that the time of the coming of the expected of nations is drawing near, and that seventy weeks of years will bring the Anointed of God.[1] Again, the glory of the second temple, built after the return of the Jews from exile, shall be greater than that of the first, which was Solomon's masterpiece, and this splendor will be due to the fact that the Messiah will enter within its portals.[2] So, the time is fixed: it will be within four hundred and ninety years; it will be while the second temple is standing.

As the time, so too the place of the birth of the Christ is foretold. The mighty Ruler will come from Bethlehem of Juda, as Micheas prophesies: "And thou Bethlehem

1 Daniel IX, 21 ff.
2 Aggeus II, 7, 8; Malach. III, 1.

. . . art a little one among the thousands of Juda: out of thee he shall come forth unto me that is to be the ruler in Israel: and his coming forth is from the beginning, from the days of eternity."[1] He shall be preceded by His precursor and herald: "Behold I shall send my angel and he shall prepare the way before my face."[2] Thus speaks the Lord by the mouth of Malachias.

There, then, is the Messiah's picture, drawn long years before His coming. The tracing of it began centuries before His advent, and more than four hundred years before His time the book of prophetic utterance was closed,—and the world waited for Him who was to come and bless all nations.

Some of the details of prophecy were still shadowy in outline; but to these we need not advert. The large strokes of the picture are so clear, that none, unless blinded by prejudice or passion, can mistake the one whose portrait is thus painted. All these predictions, referring to one and the same person, as is evident from the predictions

[1] Mich. V, 2.
[2] Malach. III, 1.

themselves and from the fact that subsequent prophets often refer either explicitly or implicitly to the former predictions, stand forth as real prophecies quite beyond the power of any mind less than the divine.

It is sheer folly to speak of these predictions as made at random and accidentally fulfilled in some one man. Common sense shows us the absurdity of such an assumption. For, suppose that today someone foretells that a certain subject people will be freed from its conqueror after many, many years; another predicts that the Liberator will come of such a family; a third, that he will be born in such a city; a fourth, that he will appear at such a time,—and so on. Now, if the probability against the accomplishment of the first prediction is ten to one, the probability against the chance fulfillment of two events combined will be a hundred to one; against the chance fulfillment of three details, a thousand to one. Multiply the details, and you multiply beyond the power of comprehension the chances against an accidental accomplishment. Hence, if there are twenty details

predicted, the probability against their joint fulfillment will be one hundred million million million to one,—and that means that there is no probability at all of such an accident. To hold to such a chance fulfillment in the case of the Messiah is simply to stultify human reason. Far more readily might one admit that from the chips and fragments of marble, that strew the floors of many, many studios the world over, there accidentally resulted that perfection of art, the Apollo Belvidere, than that the detailed accomplishment of so many predicted particulars of the future Messiah could have been found by chance in any one man.

If, then, these prophecies were fulfilled in some one man, it is clear that the foreknowledge of such fulfillment could have come from none but the Eternal God, who made known to mankind Him who was to come and proclaimed that He was in very truth the Christ of God, the legate of the Most High: and such a one, confirmed by God's approbation, could neither deceive nor be deceived in regard to His own mission and person.

Now, as a matter of concrete fact, the

prophecies were fulfilled in Jesus Christ. He came of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Juda, of the family of David. He was born in Bethlehem of Juda at the time foretold in the weeks of Daniel. He came to the second temple shortly before its final destruction. His precursor in the person of the Baptist went before His face. He was a King, though His kingdom was not of this world: it was a kingdom of truth, of peace, of holiness, of love,—a kingdom unto everlasting. Besides all this, the gospels, especially the one according to St. Matthew, indicate many other prophecies of the Old Testament fulfilled most accurately in Jesus of Nazareth. And therefore Jesus Christ is proved to be what those prophecies said that He should be, namely, the legate of the all-knowing and all-powerful God. As a consequence, the divine seal of prophecy is put upon what He said, and especially upon His claim that He was the Son of God.

There is another way, besides the one that we have just finished, in which the same seal of divine approbation is seen to be stamped on Christ's claim to divinity. This way is

to look at the prophecies, later fulfilled, which Christ Himself made and to which He appealed as proof of His mission and of His claim to be very God. We need not speak of Christ's power of seeing distant things and of reading the secrets of the heart, which are the beginnings of prophecy; but we may content ourselves with His sure predictions of future events dependent upon the free will of men or of God Himself. If, on the one hand, He foreknew these things by His own knowledge, by this very fact He showed Himself to be God. This is so obvious, after what has been said about the nature of prophecy, that I refer to it merely in passing. If, on the other hand, He made these predictions through a participation of the foreknowledge which is God's own prerogative, then God placed His divine omniscience at His disposal, and thereby gave His approbation to His legate. This approbation of God is all the more unmistakable, if the messenger was gifted, as Christ was, with an habitual supernatural knowledge. For, in God's wise and loving providence, such a favor could not be given

to a false prophet, because it would make God Himself the author of the delusion which must of necessity arise.

It is overwhelmingly clear that Christ appealed to His predictions as sure proofs of His mission. The cogency of the proof from these prophecies depended, of course, upon their subsequent fulfillment; but He appealed unhesitatingly to these prophecies as a mark of divine approbation of His mission and person. "Lo, I have foretold it to you"; "behold I have foretold you all things"; "but these things I have told you, that when the hour shall come you may remember that I told you of them" are expressions common enough in the gospels. And why should the disciples remember that He had made such predictions, except that they were an evident sign of the seal of God upon His approved legate? At the Last Supper Christ said: "At present I tell you before it come to pass" (it was of Judas' treachery that He spoke), "that when it shall come to pass, you may believe that I am he,"[1] the Messiah. To the Jews who

[1] John XIII, 19.

sought "a sign" in attestation of His mission, He refused the material, startling, perhaps magical wonder that they asked, and referred them to the sign of Jonas [1] and of the temple of God rebuilt in three days,[2]—in a word, to His resurrection, not only as a miracle, but as a prophecy, which when fulfilled would stamp His claim with the seal of God.

The probative force, then, of the prophecies of Jesus Christ is patent. If He made predictions which were more than human conjectures of future events depending upon the free will of God or man, and if these predictions were fulfilled, He is sealed with the seal of God's approbation,—and we must admit His claim to be really and truly the Son of God, just as we would heed the words of God Himself.

Christ did make such prophecies. To give an account of all of Christ's prophecies would be to go over the gospel record in its entirety; for He spoke as one to whom the future was as open a book as the pages

[1] Matt. XII, 38.
[2] John II, 19–21.

of the past. Let us glance at but some of these predictions, and let us look at them in their completeness; for if it might be possible to conjecture some one future event, it is quite beyond the limits of the most shadowy probability, that a guess could correctly compass events so many and so varied.

With regard to Himself the Master pierced the veil of the future. The prophets had indeed spoken of the sorrows of the Servant of Jahve; but the mind of the Jewish people refused to see anything but glory in the career of the Anointed of God. Even the chosen disciples of the Christ would not open their eyes to the vision of pain: they shrank from it in horror. But Christ looked at it calmly: He spoke of it dispassionately, though with the yearning of a soul longing for the consummation of its desires. He gave details of His Passion which were not painted in the portrait sketched by the seers of Israel.

At first He only hinted at the sorrows to come, when His disciples would mourn His loss: "The days shall come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them," (the

children of the marriage feast): "and then they shall fast in those days."[1] But after Peter's confession of his Master's divinity, with unshrouded clearness Christ "began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the ancients and scribes and chief priests, and be put to death, and the third day rise again."[2] And when Peter would have stood between Christ and His sorrow, he was rebuked with some of the harshest words that ever fell from the lips of the loving Master. After the transcendent glory of the Transfiguration, the same warning of the chalice to be drained was dinned into unwilling ears, that tried to shut out the sad disclosure. The most minute details of the orgy of hatred were foretold: "And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem. . . . And taking the twelve he began to tell them the things that should befall him, saying: Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man shall be betrayed to the chief priests, and to the scribes and ancients, and they shall condemn

[1] Mark II, 20.
[2] Matt. XVI, 21.

him to death and shall deliver him to the Gentiles: and they shall mock him, and spit upon him, and scourge him, and kill him: and the third day he shall rise again." [1] Oh, yes: He foretold it all. And the fulfillment is shown forth in the saddest story ever told (the history of the Passion) and in the glorious account of the resurrection from the dead.

He foretold that He would ascend into heaven and would send the Holy Ghost upon His own, that they might carry on to splendid success the work which He commissioned them to do. The Acts of the Apostles, (which have the same guarantees for reliability as the gospels themselves), describe in convincing simplicity the actual occurrence of what had been foretold by Him. All this in regard to His own person.

As for others, He predicted the glory that would come to the woman who anointed Him with precious spikenard as He sat at meat in the house of Simon the leper. Whilst He reproved the selfish indignation of those who murmured against "this waste," He

[1] Mark X, 32, 33.

said: "What she hath, she hath done: she is come beforehand to anoint my body for the burial. Amen I say to you: whereso-ever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which she hath done shall be told for a memorial of her."[1] Who could have foreseen this from any human conjecture? The very names of the great ones of the world have vanished beneath the dust of time; but this unknown woman for an apparently insignificant act, done in the sight of only a few, is more celebrated than kings and queens, and time has not been able to blot out the memory of what she did.

Christ foretold the ruin of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple of God, whose marvelous buildings were almost an object of idolatry to the Jews. "The days shall come upon thee (Jerusalem): and thy en-emies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round: and straiten thee on every side: and beat thee flat to the ground and thy children who are in thee."[2] And of the temple He said: "Seest thou these

[1] Mark XIV, 8, 9.
[2] Luke XIX, 43, 44.

great buildings? There shall not be left a stone upon a stone, that shall not be thrown down."[1] And the destruction of the city and temple under the Romans and the scattering of the Jews throughout all the lands of the earth proclaim the fulfillment of the vision of the Master.

He foretold the denial of Peter and the treason of Judas. "Amen I say to thee, . . . before the cock crow thou shalt deny me thrice":[2] "Amen I say to you, one of you shall betray me."[3] The fall of the two was foretold; the return of one and the despair of the other were foreseen and predicted: for Peter being once converted was to confirm his brethren[4] and was to lay down his life for his Master,[5] whilst for Judas "it were better for him if that man had not been born."[6] And the fulfillment? A cross on the Roman hillside bearing the crucified form of the one, and a lonely tree with its ghastly burden of the swaying

1 Mark XIII, 2.
2 Matt. XXVI, 34.
3 John XIII, 21.
4 Luke XXII, 32.
5 John XXI, 18, 19.
6 Matt. XXVI, 24.

corpse of the suicide tell the accomplishment of the Master's prophecy.

He foretold that His disciples would give testimony to Him throughout all the corners of the old earth;[1] that they would go on doing His work and carrying out the mission confided to them, battling always, but ever emerging from the conflict with the palm of victory in their hands and the crown of glorious fidelity upon their brows,—because He would be with them all days even to the consummation of the world.[2] And the Christian Church's triumphant march down the ages in the storm of the fiercest persecution, as well as in the sunshine of favoring peace, speaks in trumpet tones of the fulfillment of this prediction. It was quite beyond the possibility of mere conjecture, that such should be the outcome of the struggle in face of the humanly insurmountable difficulties from within and from without, which would have spelled disaster to any emprise of man.

He foretold that upon the shoulders of

[1] Acts I, 8.
[2] Matt. XXVIII, 20.

Peter He would lay the chief weight of the burden of future years; for He would make him the foundation of His undying Church, the key-bearer of this Kingdom of heaven on earth, the pastor of the whole great flock of the Good Shepherd: He pledged His word, that Peter, ever living in the execution of his charge, should fulfill it until the crack of doom. Was such a vision within the ken of mortal man? Human wisdom would have laughed at it. Human wisdom and human pride have laughed at it over and over again. The enemies of Peter and of the Church have caroused in their mad orgies that celebrated the passing of the Church and the utter ruin of the ruler of the flock. They have rejoiced in the death of the work of Christ and in the burial of him who called himself Christ's vicegerent on earth, even as the enemies of the Master exulted in their fiendish glee within the shadow of the cross or smirked in conscious satisfaction before the sealed door of the sepulchre. But over and over again the Church has come forth from the darkness: over and over again the old man of the Vati-

can has risen from the very shades of the tomb to rule the sons of God in the name of the Master.

These are some of Christ's prophecies, which in their fulfillment seal Him as God's ambassador with the divine approbation upon His claim to be the Son of God.

And so, by this twofold proof from prophecy Jesus of Nazareth's claim to be the envoy of God and hence to be divine, as He said He was, is stamped with the intellectual miracle of God's omniscience. Therefore Christ is truly God. Yes, even as He claimed that He was very God, the true Son of the heavenly Father, so is that claim verified by the approbation of the Godhead itself. For, by the seal of prophecy fulfilled Christ is manifested to all the world to be what He claimed to be,—divine, to be what He was declared to be by the voice of the eternal Father who spoke from the clouds of heaven over the waters of the Jordan and thundered on the mountain of the Transfiguration: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye Him."[1]

[1] Matt. III, 17; XVII, 5.

LECTURE VI

THE FATHER'S TESTIMONY

Miracles second sign of divine approval. Nature of miracle: marvelous fact; above natural forces; confirmatory of mission or doctrine. Negative and positive criteria. Christ's miracles in general. He appealed to them. Fact and character of His works. Insufficient explanations: unknown forces of nature; mental suggestion; diabolic power. Christ's last claim and last appeal. The Father's answer. Christ's Resurrection. Reality of fact. Swoon theory: hallucination theory. Conclusion.

If one acknowledges a personal God who looks with love upon His creatures and providently guards them in all their ways, he can find no difficulty in the thought, that God may interpose His special activity to approve the mission and the person of the one sent by Him. In fact, when someone presents himself as the ambassador of God, with a message which purports to be from on high, it is necessary that he should prove that he is from God. Everyone has the

right to demand such proofs before he loyally submits to the revelation as divine. And so, in the case of the ambassadorship of Jesus Christ, it was proper that Christ should show forth the approving intervention of God in His regard. For, when God's own seal guarantees Him to be a divine legate, then Christ's claims as to His mission and person are attested from heaven, and He is proved to be in a unique and incommunicable sense the true Son of God.

As we have seen, there are two ways in which God may testify His divine approval of His envoy. He may put His omniscience at the service of His legate, and by prophecy (afterwards fulfilled) show that He is with His ambassador: or he may place His omnipotence in the hands of His herald, and by superhuman works establish the fact that the envoy is His very own. Now, as we have settled beyond any doubt, Jesus Christ claimed in unmistakable terms to be in all truth divine. This was the chief part of His message and the fountain-source of the splendor of His mission. To prove that He was accredited of God, there was the divine

intervention in His very life, which in its absolute loyalty to God and its utter love for men was more than human; and all this excludes the wild assertion that He was either a vicious impostor who deceived or a deluded fool who was mistaken. Furthermore, there is the proof from the prophecies fulfilled in his person and pointing Him out as the Messiah, as well as the proof from the prophecies which He Himself made and which were fulfilled in confirmation of His divine mission. These proofs, already considered, bring us to the point where we must acknowledge Jesus Christ to be the ambassador of God, and hence very God, as He claimed He was.

In concluding our reflections, let us look at "The Father's Testimony," as shown in the miracles wrought in confirmation of the claims of Jesus Christ. If these miracles were worked by Christ's own power, they prove His divinity at once, since they are the works of God alone. Once more, this is so patent that it needs to be no more than mentioned. If, on the other hand, these miracles were wrought by the power

of the heavenly Father, then they are the testimony of God unto His messenger, and they seal Christ's claim with the stamp of divine approbation. This last is the view of the matter which we shall now consider.

As was briefly stated before, a miracle is an extraordinary effect produced in sensible nature, that goes beyond the power of finite causes, and is brought about by God Himself. If such a marvel is worked in confirmation of the mission or doctrine of anyone, it is a veritable "sign" from heaven, speaking with the voice of God in attestation of the truth of that mission or doctrine.

Three things there are that go to make up a miraculous proof. First of all, there is an extraordinary and marvelous effect produced in sensible nature, the fact of which must, of course, be established beyond the reach of reasonable doubt. But this fact must be established, as any other fact would be established. It must not be ruled out of court by preconceived philosophical notions, which form the basis of thought of so large a number of rationalists.

Those who are irrevocably committed to

the mechanical theory of the universe will not give the facts serious consideration; for their theory leaves no place for an all-powerful God, who can, if He sees fit, intervene in the established order of nature, whenever His all-wise mind sees the need or the advantage of such intervention. These men reject the facts as fables. Yet they will not see that it is not the internal character of the facts, but only the irreconcilable opposition of these facts with their own pet theories, which makes the reality an object of suspicion and derision. It is indeed true, that, when there is question of things which on the face of them are opposed to common sense and are grotesque manifestations of a diseased imagination, there is no need of a serious inquiry as to whether they happened or not. But a wild phantasmagoria of absurdities is one thing, and solid facts, which are amenable to the observation of sound senses and to the testimony of unbiased witnesses, are quite another thing. Yet this is precisely what Paulus and Strauss and Renan and Loisy and Harnack and the whole camp of liberal and rationalistic op-

ponents of miracles will not or cannot see.

Besides the fact of the marvelous event solidly established, there is the other element of its physical transcendence, which places it above the reach of natural forces. If man could bring about the wondrous effect by his own unaided power, there would be no need of appealing to superhuman activity or to the exercise of divine omnipotence. This rising above the level of the merely natural may be seen in this, that in the circumstances no natural power is capable of producing the work in question,—say, the resurrection of the dead or the foretelling of a future free event; or that it cannot produce it in the manner in which it is produced,—say, the cure of the blind or maimed at a distance and in the twinkling of an eye. The appeal of adversaries to the "hidden forces of nature" is a blind; for, though we do not know all that such forces can accomplish, we most certainly know some things which they cannot do.

And if the unbelieving adversary should refer in explanation to supramundane forces of the spiritual order, to angelic or demonic

powers, he does so without the foundation of his "scientific" proof, to which he is so fond of appealing; for it is revelation, and not experiment or philosophic disquisition, which has established the existence of pure spirits in the world beyond. Yet, if the work is above the power of man,—and that it is can easily be verified, whether man be considered in his present state or in his disembodied existence,—the fact that the work might be ascribed to angelic influence need offer no difficulty except to an out-and-out pagan.

To no one else. Everyone else sees that such spiritual forces are assuredly subject to the all-ruling superintendence of God's providence. If good, they can act only in dependence upon the loving will of God to foster the spiritual welfare of man and lead him to the truth: if bad, and therefore madly desirous to hurl man into error and sin and unending disaster, they cannot be conceived as being allowed thus irrevocably to deceive honest inquirers unto their eternal doom, because the all-wise and all-good God would not and could not permit this.

The fact being established, as well as the character of the marvel as necessarily ascribed to the immediate or mediate action of God, it is furthermore necessary to show that God has wrought the marvel in confirmation of the mission or doctrine of the wonder-worker; that the miracle is, in fact, a divine sign leading us to the knowledge of God's approbation. There are certain negative indications of this and others of a positive character.

The work itself must be such that it is not unworthy of being used by God. This criterion excludes everything of a nonsensical, foolish, grotesque, unbecoming, or indecent character; for God would not employ such follies or worse to attest His approbation of man or doctrine. By this test many, if not most, of the wonders of spiritualism are shown to be from some agent other than God. Again, anything which would tend to further the pride or egotism or sensuality of the wonder-worker would be excluded on the ground of its unworthiness on the part of God. The one who appeals to God's intervention in proof of his stand-

ing must already in his life and doctrine be, if not positively worthy, at least not wholly unworthy of such an intervention by reason of his degradation of life or because his doctrines are subversive of reverence for God or of good morals among men. Such a one could not be approved by God's own seal.

These are only negative indications, it is true; but they are of great value in coming to the knowledge of the proving force of a miracle. They may also be supplemented by positive appeal to the miracle in confirmation of the doctrine or mission or person of the wonder-worker.

These are the three elements which are necessary in order that a miracle may be a criterion of divine revelation and a seal of God's approbation. These necessary conditions rigidly exclude certain pretended "miracles" of theosophy, of Christian Science, of wild fanatics like the Jansenistic "convulsionnaires." On the other hand, a marvelous fact, historically established, beyond human achievement and actually of divine origin (either mediately or immemediately), and performed in attestation of

someone's mission from on high, speaks with the approving voice of God Himself.

Even one such fact, perfectly attested, has a value beyond all cavil, and establishes with certainty the doctrine or mission which is the object of investigation. But when there is not merely an isolated fact, but a whole legion of marvels of different character, wrought by the same person in the exercise of the same mission, so that the wonder-worker is crowned with the aureola of habitual superhuman power, the case is altogether exceptional and is clear almost to evidence. God could not thus accredit an impostor. Even though the wonder-worker were to make no express appeal to the proving force of his surpassing power, his very life would be an appeal to God's approbation. Now, this exceptional and striking exhibition of habitual superhuman power is just what we have in the case of Jesus Christ.

We shall first look in a general way at some of Christ's miracles, and later refer to the most striking marvel of all, His resurrection from the dead.

Christ did appeal to His wondrous works

as a confirmation of His mission from the Father. The link between His works and His mission is, in fact, visible even without explicit words of His. When we see the Master recompense by the exercise of His miraculous power the faith of those who believed His mission, is not the very marvel an unspoken appeal to God's testimony to that mission? Unquestionably. And so, when we hear the centurion of Capharnaum begging for his servant's cure,[1] at the same time professing his belief in Christ's power and humbly acknowledging his unworthiness that the Lord should enter under his roof; when we see the Master even at a distance heal the stricken servant, we need no words to point out the connection between Christ's works and His claims.

We behold the two blind men of Jericho,[2] seated by the wayside in the blackness of the night that was without a dawn; we hear their cry for mercy to Him whom they style "Lord, son of David," which means "Messiah, the legate of God"; we watch the Mas-

[1] Matt. VIII, 5 ff.
[2] Matt. XX, 29 ff.

ter as He touches their sightless orbs and gives them the blessed boon of vision:—and again there is no need for formal words to declare the relation of His works to His mission. Once more, the Canaanite woman,[1] with the perseverance of faith which will not be refused and will not be rebuffed, wins the healing of her afflicted daughter: and the miracle speaks as clearly as thrilling words the true claim of Him who has heard her prayer.

But besides all this, there is the open and explicit appeal to His works as the proof of His mission. When the envious scribes carped at Christ's loving words of comfort to the paralytic, telling him that his sins were forgiven him, the Master read their hating thoughts, which branded Him with the crime of blasphemy. He said to them: "Which is easier, to say to the man sick of the palsy: Thy sins are forgiven thee: or to say: Arise; take up thy bed and walk? *But that you may know* that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the man sick of the palsy), I say to

[1] Matt. XV, 22 ff.

thee, Arise, take up thy bed and go into thy house. And immediately he arose and . . . went his way in the sight of all."[1]

And look at the scene, where the disciples of the Baptist were sent by John to ask the formal question, whether Christ was the Messiah. "Art thou he that art to come" (the Messiah sent of God), "or look we for another? And in that same hour he cured many of their diseases and hurts and evil spirits, and to many that were blind he gave sight." It was a veritable flood of miraculous power let loose upon the afflicted ones who surrounded Him. "And answering he said to them: Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen. The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are made clean, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, to the poor the gospel is preached: and blessed is he whosoever shall not be scandalized in me."[2] Could anything be clearer than His appeal to the very miracles, which they witnessed, as proofs of His divine mission as the Messiah?

[1] Mark II, 9–12.
[2] Luke VII, 19–23.

Look at Him again in the midst of the mourning throng before the tomb of the dead Lazarus. As He stood in front of the open grave, and before He cried out with the majestic power of the Master of this world and the next the words which brought Lazarus back from death to life, "Lazarus, come forth!" the Christ lifted up His eyes and said to His eternal Father: "Father, I give thee thanks that thou hast heard me; and I know that thou hearest me always, but because of the people who stand about have I said it: that they may believe that thou hast sent me."[1]

Over and over again He reproached the Jews, because, in spite of the marvelous works which were the seal of heaven upon Him, they would not yield faith to Himself and His mission. "The works themselves, which I do, give testimony of me that the Father hath sent me":[2] "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though you will not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and be-

[1] John XI, 41, 42.
[2] John V, 46.

lieve that the Father is in me, and I in the Father": [1] "If I had not done among them the works that no other man hath done, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father." [2]

He would not, it is true, work the kind of prodigies which the Jews in their blinded pride asked for,—no meteoric wonders, stunning the mind and driving unwilling souls to bow down almost in spite of themselves. He did, indeed, command silence with regard to many of the signs which He wrought; but this was in accordance with His prudent providence in the gradual unfolding of His mission. But, and we cannot deny it, He did appeal to his miracles as the proof from heaven of His mission.

As a matter of plain fact, this connection between Christ's wondrous works and His mission is a thing upon which all were of one mind even during His mortal life, differ as men might about the reality and the nature of the facts themselves. The folk of Galilee

[1] John X, 37, 38.
[2] John XV, 24.

and the crowds of Judea; the unlettered, like the man blind from his birth, as well as the cultured class, as in the case of Nicodemus; the officer of Capharnaum, the friends of Lazarus, the centurion on Golgotha,—all were agreed as to the relation between Christ's works and His claims.

It only remains, then, to consider, first, whether He actually performed marvelous deeds, and secondly, whether these works so go beyond the power of natural causes, that they must be ascribed to divine intervention.

After our considerations touching the historic worth of the gospels, which have been shown to be serious and reliable history, there is really very little need to return to the question as to whether or not Christ actually wrought marvelous works. There are recorded in the gospel narrative not less than forty-one miracles or groups of miracles. These miracles are of every sort, from the healing of the sick, the driving out of devils, and the multiplication of loaves, to stilling the tempest, walking upon the heaving waters of the sea, and raising the dead.

And these are only examples of what was going on with astounding frequency; for the gospels do not contain a complete inventory of all the marvels wrought by the Christ. As St. John says, "Many other signs also did Jesus in the sight of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God." [1]

During Christ's life and in the days that followed, the faith of His disciples depended in large measure upon these wonders which He accomplished. The transports of the multitude and the hatred of His foes bespeak alike the reality of the deeds done by Him. So clearly did His works shine forth before their eyes, that His bitterest enemies could not shut out the evidence. "The chief priests and the Pharisees . . . said: What do we, for this man doth many miracles?" [2] And in the dire straits, to which their obstinate rejection of the Christ had goaded them, they tried to explain away the character of the facts, since they could not

[1] John XX, 30, 31.
[2] John XI, 47.

deny the facts themselves. They ascribed them to "Beelzebub, the prince of devils."[1]

Their example of thus distorting the nature of the facts has been followed by their kind throughout succeeding years. A Celsus and a Julian the Apostate have tried to refer the deeds of Christ to the power of magic or to the aid of demonic might. So too with their antitypes of modern times; for, aside from those of the rationalists, who reject the true record of the gospel pages as the interpolation of later days or as the story of foolish myths, the others labor with a zeal worthy of a better cause to explain by natural means the wonders which they cannot deny.

It would, as I have said, be quite useless to delay further upon the recital of these instances of Christ's power. He is the Master of material forces, as He multiplies food; He is the Sovereign of nature in her wildest moods, as He commands the winds and the waves; He is the Lord of life and death, as He gives sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf and life to the departed. And He

[1] Matt. XII, 24.

does it all so simply, yet so grandly, without the faintest trace of the sensationalism of the charlatan! A word, a gesture, an imposition of His sacred hand: and all with the perfect assurance of one who is at home on the dizziest heights of omnipotence!

All these things are not only facts, but facts that go beyond the force of natural powers: they cry to God as their author. To refer, as some of the opponents of Christian revelation do, to "the hidden forces of nature," when face to face with facts which go directly counter to the course of nature, as manifested in millions of cases under every sky and all through the ages, is utterly childish. Were these hidden forces of nature gathered into the obscure corner of Palestine, ready to act without any previous preparation and in such different manners at the mere passing of Jesus of Nazareth? He speaks; and an "unknown force" acts upon the leper and cleanses him of his loathsomeness! He wills that the servant of the centurion be healed; and an "unknown force" is set in operation to banish the sickness on the instant! He calls Peter to come

to Him over the riotous, heaving bosom of the angry deep; and an "unknown force" makes the surging waters like solid earth beneath his feet! This is not wisdom; this is not science: it is out-and-out folly.

So, from this position they retreat to the one, which would explain all the facts that they do admit, as the outcome of mental suggestion and faith-healing. One of them says: "The real force which worked the patient's cure dwelt in his own mind: the power of Jesus lay in the potency of his personality to evoke this force." [1] That is the position to which most of them come,—Harnack and Abbott and Zola and Renan and Loisy and Foggazzaro and the Christian Scientists.

But even if this explanation would hold in certain instances, what about those other cases in which it cannot possibly be applied? What about the stilling of the tempest? the multiplication of the loaves? the calling of the dead back to life? Surely here there can be no question of the healing power of mental suggestion. What of the cure at

[1] J. Estlin Carpenter, *The First Three Gospels*, p. 145.

Capharnaum of the officer's servant, who was at a distance, who had no communication with the Christ and knew not what the Master did? What about the Canaanite woman's daughter, who was healed at her mother's prayer?

With the largest possible scope assigned to the power of mental suggestion, it remains forever true that such suggestion has very narrow limits in the matter of restoring health, and that it is altogether powerless where the disorder has produced organic deterioration. Its chief power, if not the only one, is in cases due to morbid suggestion. Suggestion cannot do away with the plague-spot of leprosy; it cannot replace worn-out or consumed tissue; it cannot do even what it does do with the instant rapidity of a lightning flash.

Yet Christ did just these very things. And even in the cases where He demanded faith before He worked His cures (as He often did), it was a religious faith that He exacted. This faith was demanded sometimes before, but sometimes after the miracle,—and in this last contingency it could

have had no physical influence upon the result. This faith was at times demanded not from the sufferer himself, but from his friends or dear ones and even without the knowledge of the afflicted one. The effects of mental suggestion and those of the exercise of Christ's astounding power are as different as night is from day. No; faith-healing cannot explain the miracles of Christ.

The only resort left is that to which the almost fiendish foes of the Christ had recourse, and which no one would dare to bring forward today, namely, to say that the superhuman works of Christ were performed by the powers of hell. The gentle Master answered this charge of His accusers, when He said: "If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself: how then shall his kingdom stand?"[1] Christ's whole work was an undying struggle against the spirits of evil. For them to help Him, would have been to aid in the destruction of their own power; and they were not such fools as willingly to compass their own undoing. Besides, the whole wonder-working

[1] Matt. XII, 26.

power of Christ was exercised, not as devilish power shows itself, but in a manner most worthy of God. There was not the slightest trace of egotism or selfish ostentation in Him. He would not work a sign from above to satisfy the itching curiosity and win the vain plaudits of the morbid mob, nor to bring aid to Himself in the direst wants of nature. He scorned to use the might of heaven to curry favor with Herod and Pilate and the great ones of the land. This is not the way in which the archenemy of God and man acts: it is the way of God's Chosen One.

Therefore, the miracles of Christ are historic facts; they go beyond the power of natural forces and are the result of divine intervention; they are the proof of God's authorization of the claim of Jesus of Nazareth:—and He claimed to be the Son of God.

Yes, they are the Father's testimony to the truth of what Christ said He was. Christ's claim to be divine was made with increasing clearness as the days of His public ministry wore on; but it was at the end, as He faced death before His stern, hypocriti-

cal judges, that He made His most solemn profession of His divine mission and of His divine Sonship. Was the seal of God set on this last official declaration, as well as on those that went before? Beyond the shadow of a doubt.

The Passion was well nigh accomplished. Christ had trod the wine-press of sorrows alone from Gethsemani to the palace of the high-priest, to Herod and to Pilate. He had borne the killing torture of the scourging and crowning. He had carried the wood of His own sacrifice out to the rock of Golgotha and had been fastened to the cross by the nails that dug His hands and feet. He had lived those three hours of dying life in almost endless agony upon the rood. And as He looked back over all the prophecies and saw that they were all fulfilled, He exulted with the glad cry, "It is consummated."[1] Then He turned to His Father in heaven and committed His all to His loving care: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."[2] It was His final appeal to the

[1] John XIX, 30.
[2] Luke XXIII, 46.

Father to glorify the Son, to witness to the world that Jesus Christ was the Messiah of God, to seal His claim to divinity with the testimony of the Eternal. And the answer of the Father is Christ's resurrection from the dead.

"Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." And the tired eyes closed; the heaving breast gave one last struggling sigh; the thorn-crowned head sank down upon the gashed breast; a quiver passed over the torn body,—and He was still in death; for "bowing his head he gave up the ghost." [1]

And when the sun sank behind the lowering clouds of that ghastly night-like day, a poor torn and mangled body was taken down from the cross and laid to rest in a sepulchre that was near at hand. Few were the mourners at that sad funeral; only a broken-hearted mother, one Apostle of the disgraced Nazarene, a converted sinner, and a few disciples who, albeit in secret, had called the dead man Master. And they rolled a stone to the door of the tomb and went their way.

[1] John XIX, 30.

Christ's enemies exulted in the completeness of their cruel triumph; but in their heart of hearts they still feared the victim whom they had murdered. They remembered, as the disconsolate disciples did not, His appeal to His resurrection as the proof of His divine mission. They bore in mind His words, that the sign to their "wicked and adulterous generation"[1] would be the sign of Jonas the prophet. During His trial they had craftily tried to turn against Him His challenge, that, if they were to destroy the temple of His body, in three days He would rebuild it; and they kept this challenge in memory's chambers. And so, though they would have scoffed at any one who hinted that they feared the fulfillment of His prophetic appeal to God, still they went to Pilate and said: "Sir, we have remembered that that seducer said, while he was still alive: After three days I will rise again. Command therefore the sepulchre to be guarded until the third day, lest perhaps his disciples come and steal him away, and say to the people: He is risen from the

[1] Matt. XVI, 4.

dead: and the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said to them: You have a guard: go, guard it as you know. And they departing, made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone and setting guards."[1] In the folly of their mad prejudice and passion they were making doubly sure the fulfillment of the testimony of the Father.

The hours of Friday night crept on. Saturday dawned, grew to daylight, faded to twilight and the blackness of night; and the moon was flashed back from the gleaming spears of the guards faithful to their task of watching the tomb. Sunday morning was breaking, with the faint gray of dawn coloring the eastern sky and the soft breezes lifting the leaves of the drooping trees. It was the third day. Would He rise again as He said? In the midst of the trembling of an earthquake an angel of the Lord, "his countenance as the lightning and his raiment as the snow," "rolled back the stone and sat upon it"; "and for fear of him the guards were struck with terror and became as dead men."[2] Will He rise again?

[1] Matt. XXVII, 63–66.
[2] Matt. XXVIII, 2–4.

Hear the angels words: "He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come and see the place where the Lord was laid."[1] Already, though unseen by eye of man, Christ had passed out of the tomb, out into joy, out into life everlasting. And the Father had spoken with the voice of His omnipotence in testimony to the mission and the claim of Jesus of Nazareth.

The divine character of the resurrection and its irrefragable proof of the claim of Christ are so manifest, that no one has dared or does dare to deny its force, when the fact itself is authenticated. The Jews realized this. The rationalists of today realize it. Hence, because they are blinded by prejudice, they deny the fact of the resurrection; they recur to any and every explanation to get away from the reality which would mean the end of their proud assumptions.

The Jews paid the guards to spread the foolish story, that, whilst they slept, the disciples came and stole the body away,[2]—those crushed disciples, who feared that the Jews

[1] Matt. XXVIII, 6.
[2] Matt. XXVIII, 12–15.

after having overwhelmed the Master would wreak vengeance upon His followers, and who were cowering in terror behind closed doors. But the fact of His rising must be denied; and so, as St. Augustine says, the wild folly of "sleeping witnesses" was started down the ages as an example of the stupidity of men trying to circumvent God. It was a senseless attempt at an idiotic fraud: and the true record of the gospel hurls the lie back into their teeth.

The rationalists too deny the reality of the resurrection. It will be impossible to follow them into all the vagaries of their theories; but we may refer briefly to the two chief ones, to which the others can be reduced, namely, the swoon theory and the hallucination theory.

According to the first theory, it is said that Christ was not dead at all, and being revived after the hours in the grave made His way out of the tomb and showed Himself to His disciples. If one is mad enough to think that a man who had been through what Christ had suffered, who had been buried in two hundred pounds of spices which would

have snuffed out any spark of remaining life, could suddenly and in the full vigor of strength and health come back from the gates of death, roll away the huge stone that sealed His grave, and make His way through the ranks of the watching guards,—such a one can qualify for the position of head and front of credulous fools.

Furthermore, the absurd theory contradicts the certain testimony that Christ was really dead. The power of Rome was witness to this fact in the person of Pilate, who sent the centurion to inquire officially into the matter and gave the body of the dead Christ to Joseph of Arimathea. The soldiers who crucified Him were witnesses that He was dead; and the thrust of the soldier's spear, which transpierced His side, would have killed Him, if He had not been. The mother who bore Him and the friends of His heart were witnesses that He was dead, when they gave the last ministrations of love to His corpse and laid Him away in the grave embalmed after the manner of the Jews. The very enemies of Christ gave testimony to the fact that He was dead, as they took

precautions against the fulfillment of the promise of His resurrection. Dead was the Christ: and He lived again. The swoon theory is madness itself.

According to the other theory, Christ did not rise again from death, though His Apostles were deluded into the belief that He did: it was a case of hallucination. But, whatever the adversaries of the resurrection may say, it was no delusion that the tomb was found open and empty. Even the foes of the Master could not deny that. And this fact was but the prelude to the other fact of the repeated manifestatioin of the living Christ to His Apostles, into whose souls He drove the acceptance of the reality of His resurrection. These Apostles had been broken, crushed, abandoned in their loneliness and misery: their dream of the Kingdom had faded away before the horrible happenings of Calvary. They did not, because of their desire and expectation, interpret a spiritual presence of the adored Master as sensible and objective and manifesting itself in words and touches and deeds. So far were they from this, that the realization of

the truth had almost to be forced into their doubting souls. But the repeated manifestations of their risen Lord at length woke the faith within them and sent them forth upon their mission of testifying to the truth, with the success which bespeaks the cooperation of God. As St. Paul said, the risen Christ "was seen by Cephas, and after that by the eleven," (three times at least), "then he was seen by more than five hundred brethren at once. . . . And last of all he was also seen by me."[1] To say that this host of witnesses, so different, so sane-minded, so unimaginative, so little mindful of the promise of the Master, so often and on such diverse occasions by day and by night, singly and together, were victims of a mad hallucination is itself hallucination gone wild.

Yes, if ever a fact of history was substantiated by unequivocal proofs, the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is that fact; and we may all base our faith upon this immovable rock, as Paul did when he said: "If Christ be not risen again, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also

[1] I. Cor. XV, 5–8.

vain. . . . But now Christ is risen from the dead, the first-fruit of them that sleep."[1]

Therefore, we have this testimony of the Father as the crowning proof of Christ's divinity. In all reality Christ is divine as well as human; He is very God, the Son of the eternal Father. This is the conviction which is borne in upon every man, who with a heart pure from stifling carnal passion and a mind unclouded by the blinding mists of prejudice and a soul humble with the simplicity of a child seeks the Kingdom of God.

As we have seen in our considerations, the Catholic Church, viewed merely as a great fact in the world of today and of the past, is marked as God's accredited ambassador: with her voice ratified from heaven she proclaims the divinity of Him whom she venerates as her Founder. Besides, in the light of history, as set forth in the reliable records of the gospels, Christ is shown most certainly to have laid claim to the attributes and nature of God. This claim is worthy of acceptance for the sake of Him who made it, since to reject it is to brand Him as an

[1] I. Cor. XV, 14, 20.

impostor or a madman. Again, His claim is stamped with the seal of prophecy, which marks Him as the envoy of God with God's approbation upon His words. And as the climax of all, the Father's voice sounds forth in miracles and especially in the stupendous marvel of the resurrection from the dead, and proclaims the Christ the well beloved Son of God in whom the Father was well pleased.

Jesus Christ the Son of God! Before Him we bow down in the humble adoration of reverent homage: to Him we give the worship of our unqualified faith, of our unshaken hope, of our burning charity. What He commands we must and (please God!) we will accomplish. For us, who are of the dear old Church, that means a life of loyalty to God and of charity to men: for those who have not yet come to the one blessed fold, it means a hearkening to His call, sweet though terrible, and the fulfillment of duty through all their days. Before the sacred majesty of Christ's divine nature, consubstantial with the Father, and before the human lovableness of His manhood, consubstantial with

our humanity, we must exclaim with the Apostle St. Thomas, "My Lord and my God!"[1] and with the seraph saint of Assisi, "My God and my all!" In this spirit we can stand unshaken beneath the cross on the Friday that looms black and terrible before us; for across the mist of blood we glimpse the glory of Easter morning, and we bow down in adoring and loving faith before Jesus Christ the Son of God, the Savior.

[1] John XX, 28.

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